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GUST 1988

NEW TIMES

SOVIET WEEKLY
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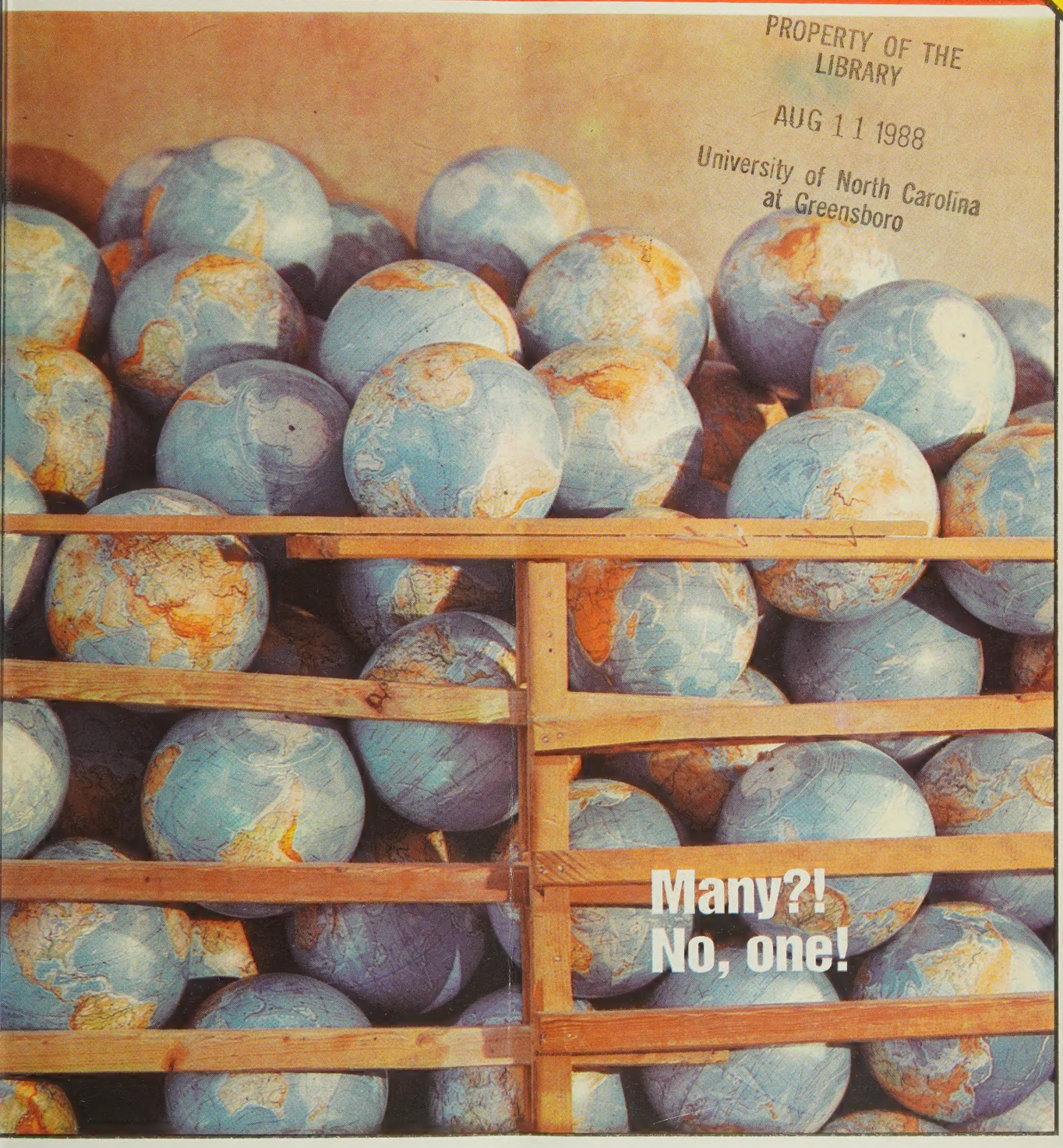

Many?! No, one!

The Ruling Party, the State and the Law

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NEW TIMES

No. 31, July 1988

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After nearly eight years of war Iraq and Iran have withdrawn to behind the frontiers that existed at the start of the conflict. Though the death toll on both sides is truly incalculable, tangible hopes have emerged that the war will end. At least the first moves towards peace have been taken. Will more such moves follow?

See p.5.

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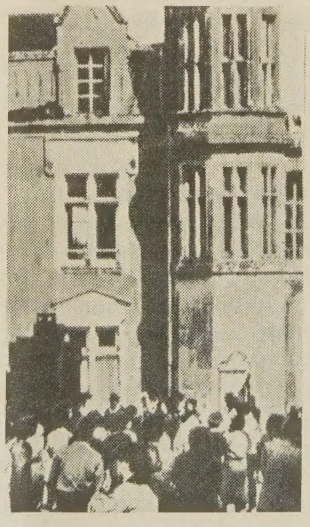

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Cover by Victor Brel

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Marine Ardent
Nice, France

■ My compatriot Marie Bérard writes (issue No. 22/88) that the young people who returned from Afghanistan could resent those who were living quietly in the Soviet Union while they were fighting the war. There is already misunderstanding and, perhaps, a gulf between those who "were" and "were not" in Afghanistan, she adds.

Something of the sort is likely to happen, and it is all too understandable. In any case, I think there will also be hatred of those journalists who have literally left Soviet lads in the hands of Western reporters. (Lev Yelin refers to them in the same issue No. 22/88).

New Times is not the only Soviet periodical I read. But until recently I had read only a few articles giving detailed accounts of the events in Afghanistan. As a result of this cover-up, people all over the world have come to believe that the Soviet Union was waging a predatory war in Afghanistan and that its troops committed atrocities there, kidnapping children, killing cattle and blowing up houses and irrigation canals.

I have read in your periodicals that Soviet tankmen once built the first school in a village and were the first to teach in it. This fact alone could serve as the subject of an interesting story. Or take the story by a Soviet officer about his men who, appalled by the poverty of the people, gave everything they had to the villagers (though I read this story in L'Humanité, not in your newspapers). I have also read in L'Humanité the verses and songs composed by lads in the breaks between fighting.

Your tactic of silence has untied the hands of Western propaganda, which has depicted helping a friend in need as a shameful war. Now I also see a neglectful attitude to the young people disabled in the Afghan war. How is this indifference to be explained? Why should the disabled lads be treated so? Planning a good hospital and a government aid programme (issue No. 23/88)... in nine years' time! I hope a rehabilitation centre will be built before the need for it has disappeared.

I suggest that New Times devote, at least once, several of its pages to stories by soldiers who have returned home (as you did in issue No. 27), and that they describe Afghanistan as they really saw it, the plain unvarnished truth. It was very interesting to read the letter from Valery Karasev (No. 18/88) and the diaries of Andrei Golovanchikov (No. 27/88).

Besides medical treatment or help in returning to civilian life, the lads who have come back from Afghanistan need to be heard, and they have the right to be heard. You might be confused by their relentless judgements. But perhaps they have serious grounds to be so severe!

Please remit the 500 francs enclosed in this letter for the building of a rehabilitation centre for the lads who served in Afghanistan and were wounded there (Inna Rudenko wrote of this centre in issue No. 23/88) and a monument to the soldiers-internationalists. It is not a big sum, but I send it from the bottom of my heart.

Sergei Sokolov
Tula, U.S.S.R.

■ I am a serviceman, and perhaps for this reason I feel greater anxiety over the fate of our soldiers taken prisoner by Afghan counter-revolutionaries than some civilians do. I myself took part in combat operations in Afghanistan in 1983-84, where I served in an air force unit. In April 1984 I was gravely wounded and for more than two years I was in hospital, where I underwent many operations, six of them very serious. But even in that difficult period I believed that I would return to the army and that my friends would not leave me in the lurch.

The lads who were taken prisoner have been through terrible ordeals, and our common duty is to help them return home as soon as possible. What I do not understand is why we kept silent about it for a long time. We knew that Soviet servicemen had been taken prisoner and, as far as I know, attempts, albeit unsuccessful, were made to secure their release. I remember distinctly that a Soviet helicopter was downed in October 1983. Its crew courageously fought to the last, but nevertheless they were captured. None of them survived: the boys were killed two hours beore an exchange for one of the mujahedeens.

All these years we have not been told the truth about Afghanistan. It is perhaps for this reason that some people think our troops had an easy life there. And after such a life they are not entitled to any privileges. The young people who served in Afghanistan sometimes meet with indifference or are even treated arrogantly by those who are obliged to show care for them.

Many decisions granting privileges to those who served in Afghanistan have been adopted in our country. This is very good. But do we know about all these privileges? Some of them are kept secret. Why? It is concealed that such servicemen are exempt from income tax, that they have priority in the provision of housing, etc. Officials and bureaucrats take advantage of our ignorance of these privileges.

I think people should know about our privileges, and those who disobey the respective decisions should be strictly punished. That is why I want to appeal to all the people: your sons, brothers and coevals went through terrible ordeals, but they honourably discharged their duty. Many of them can't even stand, because they have lost their legs. Is it their guilt that some of them have been disabled in their twenties? Or take this callous remark: "I didn't send you there" (to Afghanistan). To the man who says such a thing nothing is sacred. He is simply devoid of conscience.

The general public are also to blame in many respects. We keep silent when some people loudly express their indignation at the attempt of a disabled person to jump the queue. Or take another example: the veteran of the Afghan war wants to find a job, and learns in reply that he would do better to stay at home because the state pays him a pension – 97 rubles – which is "enough" to buy the necessary food and clothes.

War veterans also need

ontact with other people, nd remembering this should ot be confined to meetings ith soldiers-internationalists. Yet some eople forget about the war eterans' needs, and one oes not have to go far to nd examples. Personally I eel ashamed.

I think we should reflect on ll this once again and do ur best to ensure that oung soldiers returning ome can take their place mongst us as soon as posible and feel that the mother ountry has not forgotten em.

AN ARTIST'S COMMENT

Drawing by Antoni Chodorowski (Poland)

A QUESTION AT ISSUE

Audrey Blake
Westgate, Australia

■ Congratulations to the editors for the publication of a splendid article, "Give the lady a hand," in issue No. 50 last year. More than any other on the women's issue in Soviet magazines over the past few years, it put all the essential matters clearly.

The Soviet people have great achievements on this, as on most other questions, but the problems remain formidable. In social relations, and in the family, Soviet man still has a position of privilege. The life of Soviet women, especially married ones, leaves much to be desired: changes for the better in wages and working conditions are clearly needed.

The sensitive area of home and family chores, still seen as beneath the dignity of the man, needs to be an equally shared burden. And shopping is a nightmare from the viewpoint of anyone used to an efficient and well-stocked shopping system.

I fully agree with the authors of the article that the list of characteristics that are associated with men are the ones that should also be associated with modern women: strength, the ability to stand up for herself and her family, to make concessions, have a sense of humour and a balanced mind.

Mark Frank
Toronto, Canada

■ On a recent memorable trip to the Soviet Union as part of a delegation of Canadian war veterans, we visited the Winter Palace in Leningrad. I and others were surprised to see on the street adjoining a Pepsi-Cola booth with its garish sign in the very shadow of this historic spot.

I wonder if local officials are aware that this is going on and that it repeats a practice, all too familiar in the West, of denigrating our historic places. Surely the booth has to be relocated? And what do you think?

Iosif Wulfovich
Haifa, Israel

■ A man feels rich and happy only in his homeland. Unfortunately, I have realized this truth very late. I am living in a country whose regime has robbed me morally and materially. To speak more honestly, it has simply killed me. I have seen a lot in Israel. Many of those who left the Soviet Union cast aspersions about their former homeland. They urge others not to believe in the changes taking place in the Soviet Union, and are campaigning against Gorbachev.

They say that I am anti-Semitic and should be kicked out of Israel simply because I speak favourably about peace, perestroika and Gorbachev, who has initiated good reforms necessary for everyone. At the age of 14, I became a soldier and fought in the Great Patriotic War. I am now 60 and, though I may not live long, I am strong enough and, if allowed to return to the Soviet Union, would use all my energies for the cause of perestroika.

From the editors

Enclosed in the letter was a note from Iosif Wulfovich's sister Inna Sanitskaya, who has lived in the United States since 1949. She asks the Soviet government to allow her brother to return to the U.S.S.R. "A man sometimes makes mistakes," she writes, "and bitterly regrets them. For seven years my brother has been trying to get permission to go back. We would buy Iosif an apartment if you allowed him to return to the Soviet Union."

M. Kuzmin
Leningrad, U.S.S.R.

■ I think New Times has become a very interesting magazine, not only in content but also in form. It carries not a few cartoons and drawings. The rubrics "New perspectives" and "Artist's comment" are commendable.It is good that drawings are also used to illustrate articles.

The local character of the humour in the magazine Krokodil and the "protective" character of its satire are depressing, whereas the internationalism of NT cartoons is welcome. I am sure that NT cartoons are accessible to Greek, Polish, British and Portuguese readers, to say nothing of Soviet readers, especially those who believe that "humour is the king of daily life, and a man is its buffoon."

Ehrenfried Wohlfarth
Berlin, G.D.R.

■ I have read the article "Moral renewal" published in issue No. 13. The straigtforward and radical character of the exposure of shortcomings and distortions, the comprehensive and dialectic approach to the issues being tackled are encouraging signs in your perestroika.

Hypocrisy and amorality always grow when there is a gulf between accepted policy and practice. A moral renewal can be brought about only when citizens have a say and genuine socialist democracy embraces all spheres of life.

GLASNOST

PRIVATE OPINION

HIGHLIGHT OF THE WEEK

GENE ROBERT LA ROCQUE, Rear Admiral (ret.), Director of the Centre for Defence Information (U.S.A.)

I learned of the results of the recent meeting of the Warsaw Treaty's Political Consultative Committee when I was already in Moscow. I would assess them as exceptionally positive. It has been clear for many years that the NATO and Warsaw Treaty states, which have large numbers of both nuclear and conventional weapons in Europe, ought to take major steps towards reducing them. The same applies to a reduction of armed forces on the continent.

I welcome the idea of exchanging information in various fields. It will be much easier to reach an agreement if such a free exchange is established between the Warsaw Treaty and NATO states. This exchange should first of all include exact information about the armed forces of both sides in each European country. Without such information it is difficult to imagine how confidence can be strengthened and an arms limitation agreement concluded.

Confidence measures have been a key issue at U.S.-Soviet meetings at practically all levels. Our delegation brought an interesting collection of documents to the second Soviet-U.S. meeting of retired generals and admirals. We had compiled a catalogue of Soviet and American troops stationed in West and East Germany. Moreover, we had drawn up an inventory of NATO and Warsaw Treaty troops in Europe as a whole, and of American and Soviet troops in other countries. We would like our Soviet colleagues and friends to comment on how accurate these data are.

Many of the participants in the meeting fought in the second world war, and are therefore quite competent to examine questions relating to military preparations. As experts, we can conclude that war is not a means of solving mankind's problems.

My experience as a former commander of the U.S. Navy in the Mediterranean convinces me that the Soviet Union and the United States can achieve their objectives without causing damage to each other. I would like to see more Soviet ships docking at American ports and American ships at Soviet ports, thereby helping to destroy the "enemy image" and promote the cause of peace and détente.

VALERY CHICHKHANOV, corresponding member of the U.S.S.R. Academy of Sciences, Director of the Institute of Economics, Urals branch of the Academy of Sciences

The State Committee of the U.S.S.R. on Statistics has summed up the results of the country's economic and social development in the first half of 1988. Its report takes up almost three pages of Pravda. A man with little knowledge of economics feels miserable in an ocean of facts and figures and compares the information drawn from the report with his personal observations in shops, daily life and on public transport. I think the staff of economic and statistical departments should do the same.

On the whole, the results of the first six months are gratifying: a 5 per cent increase in the national income and a 4.7 per cent growth in industrial output, with consumer goods output rising for the first time 50 per cent more quickly than the output of the means of production, and the entire increment obtained thanks to higher productivity of labour, with an absolute reduction in the personnel employed in the sphere of material production.

But the effect of all this in our daily life is still small. Many goods are still in short supply, and their quality needs to be improved. Long queues have appeared here and there. As producers, we can be satisfied with what has been achieved in the first half of this year. But what about consumers? When we are equally satisfied in both capacities, when the manager of a footwear factory is not ashamed to present his wife with a pair of shoes made at his factory, then it can be said that the economic reforms have produced the desired results.

THE PUGWASH MOVEMENT– YESTERDAY, TODAY, TOMORROW

Secret society? Or generator of new ideas?

Such is the title of the first free supplement put out by the magazine this year. Among its authors are prominent scientists from the Soviet Union, the United States, Britain, Poland, India, and the German Democratic Republic. The readers will know what aims have been set by this influential public movement of scientists and how it arose and developed. The spiritiaul potential and importance of the movement for the present-day world are evident at least from the fact that many of the ideas in forming the new political thinking were first expressed at Pugwash conferences. This year a new Pugwash conference will open in Dagomys, the Soviet Union, on August 29.

New Times subscribers will receive the supplement with issue No. 32

Peace without victory

We would very much like to end this article with these words: "As this issue was being compiled Iran and Iraq established a ceasefire throughout the front and the Gulf. An agreement has been reached to open peace talks between the two countries..."

Fighting between the two countries is going on. Nevertheless, good signs emerged in the middle of July. Quite unexpectedly Iranian troops withdrew from the city of Halabja in Iraqi Kurdistan. On July 17 the Iraqi President Saddam Hussain, speaking on the 20th anniversary of the revolution, proposed a peace treaty to Iran. On the same day Iraqi troops withdrew from the city of Dehloran, captured five days previously, and retreated within Iraq's frontiers.

On the next day Iran accepted the U.N. Security Council Resolution 598 of July 20 1987. Earlier, Teheran had stated that before accepting the Resolution it was first necessary to name the party which started the war.

Who is to blame?

That is a difficult question and there is no getting away from it. Sooner or later the leaders of the two countries will have to look for an answer to it at the negotiating table, and both will have to exercise a maximum of restraint. An emotional outburst of a leader could take a toll of thousands of lives.

The view current among Iranians is that Iraq is the aggressor and that it started the war, whereas they had to defend themselves. A well-known Iraqi journalist who has visited us at the New Times office explained that Iraq did indeed start the war, but that it had no choice. He said that the Iranians were poised for an attack and had massed a huge army on the border.

Let us look back at the history of the war. In response to the above charge, the Iranians would say that Iraq provoked border clashes on June 4, 1980. Iraq would say that Iran had actually provoked the clashes after it violated the immunity of Iraqi diplomats. Iran would point out that by April 29, 1980, 30 thousand of its nationals had been expelled from Iraq. Baghdad would respond by saying that the Iranian Foreign Minister declared on April 9, 1980 that Iran "had decided to topple the Baathist government of Saddam Hussain."

The mutual recrimination goes on and on. Relations between the two countries deteriorated steadily and the acrimonious exchanges between them began to resemble the issue of the hen and the egg.

How did it all begin? The roots of evil appear to be imbedded firmly in the period when, at the turn of this century, imperialist powers set about carving the world into spheres of influence. Frontiers were at times drawn with the aid of a ruler. On other occasions a great deal of forethought was displayed as the seeds of future border conflicts were planted lest neighbouring dependencies should gain independence one day. The border between Iran and Iraq, which was part of the Ottoman Empire, was delineated in Constantinople in 1913. In 1937 Iraq was granted rights to an area on the east bank of the Shatt al-Arab waterway. These rights were withdrawn in 1969 during the Shah's rule.

In 1975 an agreement was signed in Algiers according to which Iraq accepted the demarcation of the border along the mid-course of the deepest stretches of the Shatt al-Arab waterway. Under that arrangement both countries could have unrestricted use of that short waterway emptying into the Gulf. The Shah of Persia failed to abide by the agreement and from then on relations between the two countries continued to worsen. The legacy of the late Shah proved a deadly one.

Who is to blame after all? It looks as if there can be no conclusive answer to

that question, whatever Iran and Iraq may say. During the nearly eight years of the senseless war, both countries have paid a monstrous price for their failure to settle their differences.

The war's toll

Even a cursory look at the history of the war shows that it has never made any sense. At the first stage of the war, between September 1980 and May 1982, Iraqi troops were on the offensive in a bid to capture Iran's oil fields. Iraq failed to capture them, but it had the initiative.

At the second stage, between May 1982 and the spring of 1984, Iran mounted a sweeping counteroffensive and captured part of Iraq's territory. During that stage the tanker war in the Gulf began.

During the third stage, starting in the spring of 1984, neither side managed to make territorial gains, although Iran did capture the Iraqi Fao peninsula. At the same time, U.S. naval vessels moved into the Persian Gulf where both sides had stepped up their attacks on tankers carrying each other's oil. The tug of war at the front was compensated for by the war of cities, as civilian urban targets on both sides came under shelling and missile fire.

To date the Iraqis have repossessed the Fao peninsula and other territories. Deputy Foreign Minister of Iran Hossein Sheikh-el-Islam declared that the troops of both countries are back within the state frontiers of 1980.

That indeed is what the situation is roughly like today. Iran and Iraq are back to square one, having paid a terible price for the cycle of violence they unleashed.

The bone of contention was a small disputed area along a border waterway, and given good will the dispute could have been easily resolved at the negotiating table. But ideologies clashed as Iraq stuck to its policy of Arab nationalism and secular state, while Iran remained committed to a policy of "gaining power and might to establish Islam throughout the world."

Iraq expected that its ideas would be supported in Iran's predominantly Arab province of Khuzistan. Iran was hoping that the Iraqi Shiites, accounting for 60 per cent of the population, would join their efforts to "defend Islam and commit the infidel rulers to the nethermost hell."

The war's toll of life is gruesome. Estimates of losses on both sides are contradictory, but clearly hundreds of thousands of lives have been sacrificed. According to approximate figures quoted at the U.N. Security Council, more than a million people, women and children included, have died on both sides. A million Iranians and 300 thousand Iraqis have been disabled. The damage to property is estimated at 500 billion dollars.

The figures of military expenditures are also contradictory. According to The Financial Times, Iraq's foreign debt is between 25 and 60 billion dollars. The British magazine The Middle East puts it between 85 and 95 billion dollars. At the same time, the magazine says that Iran has no foreign debt, but its treasury has been exhausted.

How holy is the war?

There was no question of the priority of manpower over military hardware in the days when wars were fought with sticks and hatchets. It is in our time that the military ponder on what is more important in present-day war: manpower or hardware. Some say that even in nuclear war manpower is more important than anything else. Others point out that wars are won by better hardware used by a small humber of skilled operators.

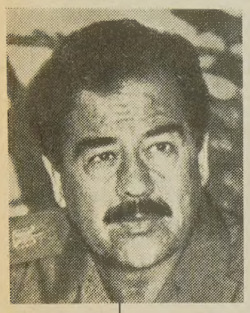
The balance in the Iran-Iraq war went something like this: Iran had three times more men and Iraq had three times more hardware. More recent estimates question this assessment, but nevertheless it is generally believed that Iraq has better equipment while Iran has more men.

Has anyone really won over these eight years? It may sound paradoxical, but the withdrawal of Iranian troops from Halabja is a victory for the Iranians, just as the withdrawal of Iraqi troops from Dehloran is a victory for the Iraqis. President Hussain's peace proposals are a step towards an Iraqi victory, and President Khamenei's letter accepting Resolution 598 is a step towards an Iranian victory. The reconciliation of the two countries would be a victory for both. True valour will be displayed in getting rid of spurious military ambitions rather than in launching another offensive against the people of the other side, already bled white by the war.

The Iran-Iraq war between coreligionists has been called a "holy war," but the Koran says that "...if two parties of the believers contend with one another, do ye endeavour to compose the matter between them... Verify that the true believers are brethren; wherefore reconcile your brethren."

DMITRY ZGERSKY

President Saddam Hussain of Iraq:



Peace must rely on the following clearly defined principles:

A total and unconditional troop withdrawal to within internationally recognized boundaries;

A full and immediate exchange of POWs;

A treaty on peace and non-aggression between the two countries;

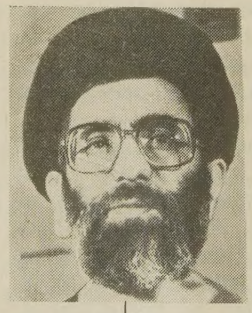
Non-interference in internal affairs and respect by each side for the other's choice must be guaranteed;

Iran and Iraq must play a positive part in establishing stability and security in the Gulf, and

Iraq's rights to the Shatt al-Arab waterway must be recognized in keeping with international law. Iraq, as a Gulf state, has a right to free navigation in the Gulf and in the Strait of Ormuz.

(From Hussain's speech on July 17, 1988)

President Sayed Ali Khamenei of Iran:



Under these circumstances, Your Excellency's efforts for the implementation of Resolution 598 is of particular importance. The Islamic Republic of Iran has always provided you with its assistance and support to achieve this objective. In this context, we have decided to officially declare that the Islamic Republic of Iran – because of the importance it attaches to saving the lives of human beings and the establishment of justice and regional and international peace and security – accepts Security Council Resolution 598.

We hope that the official declaration of this position by the Islamic Republic of Iran would assist you in continuing your efforts which have always received our support and appreciation.

(From Khamenei's letter to the U.N. Secretary-General)

A burden for Perez de Cuellar

I am certain that U.N. Secretary-General Perez de Cuellar has no complaints about the added burden he has come to shoulder of late as real chances emerge of bringing the Iran-Iraq war to an end.

On July 18 the U.N. Secretary-General received a letter from the Iranian President Sayed Ali Khamenei whereby Iran officially accepted U.N. Security Council Resolution 598 of July 20, 1987. Iraq had accepted the resolution much earlier.

The above resolution calls on all nations to show a maximum of restraint in assisting its implementation. That part of the resolution assumes special relevance in view of the fact that Iran's acceptance of the resolution coincided with the debate at the U.N. Security Council on the shooting down of an Iranian passenger liner by a rocket fired by an American cruiser. The shooting down of the air liner is just one episode in Washington's power game in the Gulf. In the last few days spokesmen for the U.S. administration have gone out of their way to create the impression that the effect of the massive U.S. naval presence in the Gulf was nothing short of positive.

The very fact of the deaths of nearly three hundred people of various nationalities who had nothing whatsoever to do with the conflict makes claims about the "contribution" of the U.S. Navy to settling the conflict downright cynical. Their deaths were a direct result of the steadily growing domination of U.S. actions in the Gulf by the logic of direct armed interference. A real contribution to settling the conflict and stabilizing the situation would be made by the removal of all foreign military presence from the Gulf.

What led Iran to accept Security Council Resolution 598 a year after it was adopted? The signs are that the course of the war has revealed that the hopes of some of the Iranian leadership of achieving a decisive breakthrough on the battlefield and winning back the strategic initiative, firmly held by Iraq over the recent period, are not likely to materialize. The Iranian government was also influenced by the fact that, despite its military success, Iraq has strengthened its declared commitment to bringing the war to an end without any territorial gains and without winners or losers. That stance was demonstrated recently in the central sector of the front. After a series of successful operations there, the Iraqis chose to retreat to their border rather than entrench themselves. The decision to accept Resolution 598 signed by the Iranian spiritual leader Ayatollah Khomeini was clearly not an easy one. Debates have been going on for some time within the Iranian leadership on the prospects of the war against Iraq amid growing signs of war weariness and a ground swell of anti-war sentiments.

The Iranian leadership acted wisely in accepting the resolution at a time when an end to the war could really be an honourable one for both sides. The situation at the front induced Iran to withdraw some of its more extremist demands as, for instance, the removal of the present Iraqi government. Defining who is to blame for the conflict may prove a delicate matter.

The U.N. Secretary-General has a lot of work ahead of him as he performs his duties in keeping with the mandate of the Security Council and in close coordination with its members. For a start, a date must be set for a ceasefire, U.N. supervision of troop withdrawals to within internationally recognized boundaries must be assured, and timetables for POW exchanges and Iran-Iraq talks must be drawn up.

The Soviet Union responded at once by voicing its profound satisfaction with Iran's move towards beginning a negotiated settlement. Soviet diplomacy will contribute actively to laying a reliable foundation for a settlement and creating a situation of peace and security in a neighbouring region. It goes to its credit that it showed restraint over the pressing demands of a number of Western and other countries that Iran be "punished" for procrastination over the acceptance of Resolution 598 and a blocade be imposed on it under an appropriate Security Council resolution. Such a resolution would hardly have worked – it is enough to recall the Irangate affair – and, worse still, it could only have encouraged Iran's belligerent rejection of outside pressure.

ALEXANDER ZOTOV

The U.N. Security Council Resolution 598 contains the following:

A demand for an immediate ceasefire on land, sea and air followed by a withdrawal of forces to international boundaries;

A call for a team of observers to verify the ceasefire under the instructions of the U.N. Secretary-General;

A call for the release of all prisoners of war;

A call on the two belligerents to cooperate fully with the Secretary-General in implementing the Resolution and in mediation efforts to achieve a lasting solution to the conflict;

5. A call on all other states to assist in implementing the Resolution;

6. A request addressing one of the Iranian government's demands by asking the Secretary-General to explore, in consultation with Iran and Iraq, "the question of entrusting an impartial body with inquiry into responsibility for the conflict";

7. A statement of the possibility of international assistance for postwar reconstruction efforts;

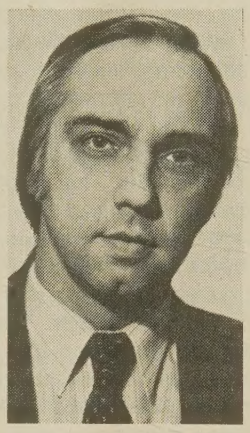
8 and 9. Requests to the Secretary-General to explore ways of ensuring lasting security in the region and to report back to the Council on progress on the Resolution; and

10. An affirmation that the Council would "meet again as necessary to consider further steps to ensure compliance with this Resolution."

July 20, 1987

Putting our cards on the table

Dmitry Pogorzhelsky



I am convinced that the programme for easing military tensions in Europe from the Atlantic to the Urals advanced by the Warsaw meeting of the WTO Political Consultative Committee will be discussed at length by our partners in the West. Many seasoned politicians rightly see it as an excellent platform for discussion and an opportunity to deal with the problem of conventional weapons.

Not a few political figures disagree, of course, but the consensus seems to be that the recognition of imbalances by the East marks progress. What is going to happen next?

The stand taken by the allies in the Warsaw Treaty Organization is logical: in order to identify imbalances and be able to get rid of them, the two sides must exchange data, and it is here that the problems arise.

The West has been trying to avoid exchanges of data on various pretexts. It has been insisting that the Soviet Union and its allies take unilateral steps. It has been lavish in supporting its claims of Eastern supremacy in this or that type of armament with epithets such as "frightening", "considerable", "menacing" and "overwhelming".

I would very much like to dismiss all these propaganda overstatements, but I cannot do so for the simple reason that I do not know the exact figures for the imbalances on our side. These and many other figures have never been published here. The Soviet Union has acknowledged that there are imbalances on both sides. The East is, for instance, superior in tanks, which is a major source of concern in the West. Estimates have been made by our scientists, for example, in the yearbook "Disarmament and Security," issued recently by the Institute of World Economics and International Relations, but they deal in rough figures based on Western sources and estimates. Frankly speaking, there is a serious need for official figures, and we journalists experience it too.

One feels uncomfortable when articles written by the Soviet Defence Minister contain references to the London-based International Institute for Strategic Studies, or the Pentagon. The case in point is our own armed forces after all, and the idea that our Defence Minister has no other way of knowing the true figures is mind-boggling. Our military expenditure, in particular the financing of specific defence programmes, could perhaps be stated more precisely, and our Western opponents would then have no grounds to reproach Moscow with concealing the real situation.

Readers of New Times and other magazines are quite right, in my view, when they say that the Soviet public know far more about NATO's military strength in terms of facts and figures than they know about their own armed forces. The classification of these statistics provides another opportunity to talk of a "closed Soviet society" and tarring the enemy's face even more.

Glasnost is needed in the military field too

The question I want to ask is why can't we, having consulted our allies, put our cards on the table? I see no concession in doing so, because it would come as a natural manifestation of openness and an affirmation of our sincere desire to get the reduction of conventional weapons off the ground.

Here is a precedent. For many years the Soviet Union would not even acknowledge the presence of chemical weapons in its arsenals, and for many years it evaded all probing on the subject. Last year the "secret" was revealed when the Soviet Union said exactly how many chemical weapons it had and how it proposed to go about scrapping them. A special facility is being built to scrap war agents, and Western newsmen and experts have been seen walking about the once top-secret facilities in Shikhany and near Moscow. All these steps were taken in spite of the fact that no convention has yet been signed imposing a global chemical weapons ban and destroying chemical weapon stocks.

Sceptics will be quick to point out that all this sounds wonderful, but the trouble is that progress toward a chemical weapon ban has been very slow indeed. That is quite correct, but it is also true that for one thing, the Soviet revelations did indeed put paid to rumours about "enormous Soviet stocks of chemical weapons." The American team at the chemical weapon talks is finding it harder and harder to evade questions from America's own allies, many of whom are in favour of banning chemical weapons once and for all worldwide. If our partners at the Geneva Conference still lack the political will to take the appropriate steps to sign the convention at an early date, their image in the eyes of the world community is none the better for it.

Many Western experts with whom I have met (most of them, it must be said, representing the views of liberal and social-democratic circles in Western Europe) have had a great deal to tell me about the positive effect glasnost about things military would have. It is hard not to agree with them, the more so now that the Soviet Union has called from the U.N. rostrum for openness in the sensitive field of armaments.

Are we going to put our cards on the table after all?

A step towards each other

"But just when the talks looked like floundering Vladillen Vasev, head of the Africa department in the Soviet Foreign Ministry, stepped in and the next day (after he conferred with Angolan and Cuban delegations) the whole tone changed dramatically."
Business Day (South Africa)

Vladillen Vasev, a member of the Soviet Foreign Ministry Collegium, is interviewed by Mikhail Khrobostov of New Times.

New Times. What is the situation at the talks at the moment, and why did the Soviet Union not join the efforts to settle relations between Angola and South Africa earlier?

V. Vasev. The talks began with working contacts between Angola and the United States established in 1982. After that, the Americans offered their services in mediating at indirect talks between Angola and South Africa. As a result, the Lusaka accords were reached, but unfortunately they failed to bring peace to the region.

Our observer status is due to a number of factors. The Soviet Union has been watching the situation in the region closely and it is interested in a just settlement of the problem at an early date; but we believe that the actual ways of achieving this and the number of parties concerned should be determined by the direct parties to the conflict.

After appropriate conditions had emerged, we joined the process with the general consent of Angola, Cuba and the U.S. as parties to the talks.

An important factor that commits us to observer status in the process is that we have no relations with South Africa.

N.T. What has been the part of the United States in mediating at the talks between Angola and South Africa?

V.V. The Americans have assumed the role of an honest broker at the talks. They conveyed the proposals of the two sides technically without expressing their own attitude to them. The final stage before the London meeting is of particular interest. The Angolans and Cubans were tired of dealing through a middleman since none of their proposals had aroused any direct response and they decided to enter into direct talks with Pretoria. The South Africans accepted and the first direct session took place early in May in London.

N.T. At which of the four sessions were you directly involved as Soviet observer?

V.V. I went to London and Cairo, but I did not go to New York. We instructed one of our embassy staff in the United States to carry out that function.

N.T. Has there been any development in the stand of the South African delegation?

V.V. My own view is that at the Cairo session South Africa has made considerable concessions, but in order to save face it tabled a clearly unacceptable document before that session, which was of course taken to pieces by Angola and Cuba. In the circumstances, the conference could have ground to a halt. We told Chester Crocker, U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, bluntly that South Africa must abandon the unacceptable points in their document – for instance, a special status for UNITA and some sort of security zone in the south of Angola.

Mr Crocker must have brought his influence to bear on the South African team.

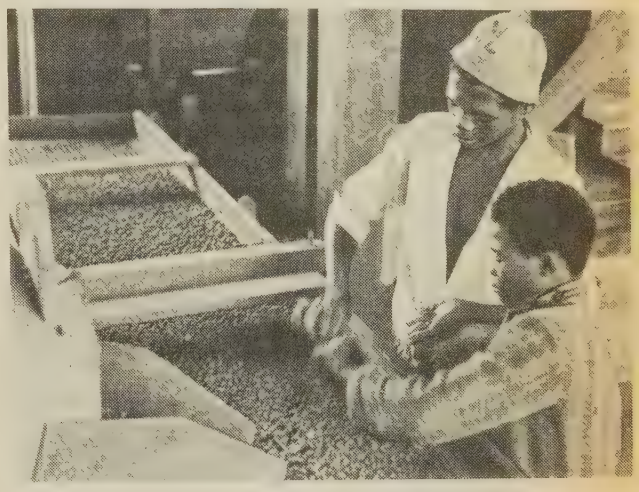
N.T. What did the conflict lead to in the end?

V.V. In the end the South Africans had to abandon their demands mentioned above.

The Angolans and Cubans tabled their own draft document and in the end we had two documents before us: one contained 10 points and the other 15, and on that basis we were able to proceed to draft the principles of a settlement. These documents were taken to New York, where experts dicussed them.

N.T. What was the outcome of the talks in New York?

V.V. Proceeding from the documents submitted to it, the New York session drafted 14 principles of settlement in southern Africa, the most important of which is compliance with U.N. Security Council Resolution 435.



Will these coffee sorters soon be able to work in peace?

N.T. Would you remind our readers what that resolution essentially provides for?

V.V. The resolution deals with the granting of independence to Namibia and provides a timetable, a very detailed timetable for it. It also provides for the phased withdrawal of South African troops, a procedure ensuring democratic elections, and the setting up of a U.N. force to assist Namibia's transition to independence.

N.T. How did the linkage emerge between the settlement of the Namibian situation and the withdrawal of Cuban troops from Angola?

V.V. The Reagan administration insisted on that linkage from the outset, and as a result no progress was made towards granting independence to Namibia for eight years. In 1983 Angola and Cuba said that Cuban troops would be withdrawn once independence was granted to Namibia, believing that the security of Angola would grow considerably after in-

dependence had been granted to Namibia.

N.T. What issues have not been covered?

V.V. The fate of UNITA is one of them, and that is because this particular set of talks deals with external problems, the independence of Namibia on the one hand, and the security of Angola on the other. The future of UNITA's relationship with the Angolan government is a different matter and an internal one, although UNITA is supported by South Africa and the U.S.

N.T. There has been some talk of timing the signing of an appropriate agreement to coincide with September 29, the 10th anniversary of Resolution 435. Do you believe that setting a formal date for the event in this way may have an adverse effect on the talks?

V.V. The idea was voiced by Cuba in the first place. It was suggested in London. The South African delegation has not so far commented on it, and the United States turned it down. During the Moscow summit the Americans unexpectedly came out in favour of it. We said that we would like to see a successful outcome to the talks as soon as possible although we have some objections to setting a date for this.

N.T. You have had a meeting with a South African journalist. What did you discuss?

V.V. On July 20 I talked for two hours with Peter Sullivan of the Pretoria News and his wife, Clara Robertson, also a journalist, working for The Star, who came to Moscow to get firsthand information of the Soviet stand with regard to a southern African settlement. They had a lot of nice things to say to me, but that is unimportant. Their questions were basically the same as yours.

N.T. Do you think the talks will be a success?

V.V. We must bear in mind that they will be conducted in several stages. Much will also depend on what the sides have to submit to each other in Geneva. It is an uphill job but we hope that an agreement acceptable to the parties concerned will be signed.

N.T. Let me wish you every success at future rounds of the talks.

High Hopes

Our own correspondent
***Nikolai Reshetnyak** reports on the response of the frontline states*

A document on a settlement of the crisis in southern Africa drafted during a series of quadripartite talks has been published in Lusaka, Pretoria, Washington, Havana and Luanda. It would seem that there can only be one kind of response to it.

Zambia has on many occasions experienced the effects of the terrorist policies of South Africa and its experience of war has been gained at first hand.

Zambia is the centre of the frontlilne states, and its President Kenneth Kaunda has been elected chairman of that association. The ANC headquarters and its other divisions are situated in Lusaka, and the South West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO) has a mission here. It is quite natural that Zambian politicians and the leaders of the ANC and SWAPO want a just and lasting peace in the region more than anything else. All those whom I have met lately have spoken with satisfaction about the fact that a cardinal agreement has been reached on granting independence to Namibia on the basis of U.N. Security Council Resolution 435, and that the governments of Angola and South Africa have agreed to cooperate with the U.N. Secretary-General with a view to assuring the independence of that long-suffering country through a free and fair election there. Under the agreement, the South African troops of occupation are to be withdrawn from Namibia.

There has been general approval here of the fact that the principles of settlement provide for a phased withdrawal to the north and, subsequently, the phased and total withdrawal of Cuban troops from the territory of Angola, under an appropriate agreement between Angola and Cuba, and the decision of the two countries to ask the U.N. Security Council to supervise the process.

Weary of constant tension, Zambians have welcomed the fact that the document emphasizes the need to respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the parties concerned, refrain from interference in internal affairs and border violations, from making territories available for the actions of hostile groups and using force, and deal with all disputed issues at the negotiating table. This paves the way for the long-awaited peace.

Various comments have been made on the outcome of the latest round of the talks, however. The Zambians and members of the ANC and SWAPO point out that the peace plan for Angola defined in the final document says nothing about the fate of UNITA bands armed by the United States. Washington has said that it will continue to supply arms to Jonas Savimbi until a political compromise is reached in Angola, and this means that there will be more bloodshed on Angolan soil.

In an alarming development, the South African Foreign Minister Roelof Botha told a news conference immediately after the document was signed that now is not the time to raise the issues of putting an end to South African aid to UNITA...

Zambia and other frontline states have also been troubled by the fact that no immediate action followed the signing of the document. They are expecting all parties concerned, and in particular South Africa and the U.S., to adopt a constructive approach.

Addressing a session of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the MPLA–Party of Labour, Angolan President Jose Eduardo dos Santos said that the parties to the quadripartite talks have never been closer to resolving the problems of the region. He described this as a victory for reason, political realism and the notion that no country should ever use armed force to gain its ends. The Angolan President called for a date to be set for the start of the implementation of the U.N. Security Council Resolution 435 on Namibia's independence before this year is out, and for agreements to be reached to achieve peace and stability for Angola and Namibia, and treaties signed at a later date to make southern Africa a zone of peace, free development and cooperation.

There is every reason to believe that all the leaders of the frontline states would support that statement. ■

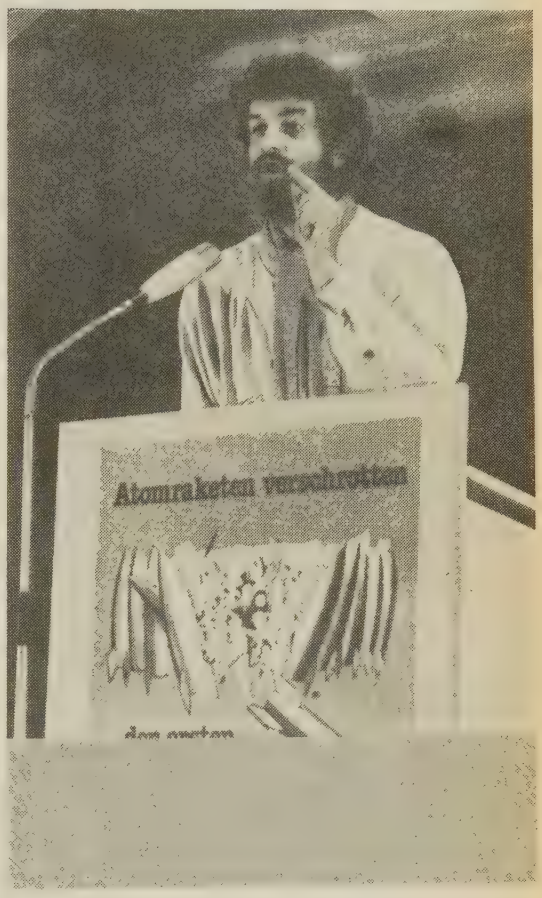
What we need is a lot more zero options

Gerd Greune

The historic Soviet-American INF treaty has finally been ratified. Millions around the world see that event as an act of reason. The whole world watched closely for several years as progress toward the treaty was made. We have all been shown once again that given the political will to secure disarmament in tangible terms, a whole package of documents can be finalized, agreed on, and signed in the space of several months. What is it, then, that causes delays and procrastination? Who stands to gain from the vast military arsenals that tend to proliferate around the world? What is the motivation for fears about further progress in disarmament and action to end the arms race?

Anyone with a sense of logic can see that if nuclear weapons are ever used those against whom they are directed as well as those who launch them will be in the same position: dead. Everyone knows that no war in the Northern Hemisphere can be contained and that, unlike the past two world wars, there can be no survivors in a war today. Major industrial facilities, the chemical and nuclear power engineering industries are extremely vulnerable and even in peacetime they are virtual time bombs. The disasters at Basel and Chernobyl came as forceful reminders of that.

But still, every single nuclear weapon is the subject of bitter bargaining, as if the destiny of this civilization depended on each individual missile. If we are all agreed that verification of disarmament agreements will be most reliable only if whole classes of weapon are abolished altogether, would it not appear to be right as well to call for more zero options? Would cutting intercontinental ballistic missiles by half suffice? Do we really feel any safer if the erstwhile 60-fold overkill potential has been scaled down to a "mere" 30-fold? Are we really more secure knowing that the mutual destruction of the Soviet Union and the United States is assured? Isn't pulling whole classes of weapons out of the most explosive regions a far more realistic option than bargaining interminably over the measure of security attained by "the proper balancing of armaments"? This is the lesson to be drawn from the double zero option.



Whenever there is a choice between deploying weapons or scrapping them, there is a good chance that the delusion will prevail that security can be attained by technical means. Hence the delusion that invulnerability can be achieved by anti-ballistic missile defence or enhanced strike accuracy, a delusion that has delivered horrendous weaponry to the world. It must be discarded once and for all if we are to approach our own future responsibly and if we are to guarantee our children a future. What we need is an entirely different policy.

Immediately after the Second World War hopes ran high for general and complete disarmament. It was proposed as well that armaments be kept at levels sufficient solely for maintaining law and order within nations, but no progress has been made towards that vision of the world as military thinking maintains its grip on international relations and as every nation is prepared for the worst. That is why the generals keep on calling for more and deadlier weapons, more resources and more troops. A realistic attitude to the scale of the threat one faces is undoubtedly considered a prerequisite for a correct security concept and appropriate decision-making. Hence the more certain we are that the chances of gaining political ends by military means are waning and the readiness to abandon military potentials is growing, the more surefooted will be our progress toward comprehensive disarmament.

The INF treaty also demonstrated that powerful public pressure is capable of setting politics in motion. The peace movement has become a political factor that gives millions hope that the world will edge away from the brink. Its influence must not be overestimated, but experience suggests that the man in the street is not a mere onlooker and that he must take his choice. He who remains silent as he looks at evil being done is an accomplice to that evil. That is the inevitable conclusion to be drawn from the nightmarish experience of recent German his-

Gerd Greune is one of the leaders of the Coordinating Peace Committee in the F.R.G.

tory. Millions of young Germans were goaded to attack their country's neighbours and millions died terrible deaths.

We know now that the most important task is to work hard to build a world without wars, do away with social injustice, correct technological errors, strengthen solidarity with the weak, and reconcile the nations to each other. This requires great efforts and support from governments, for no one needs any weapons or soldiers' uniforms in the world today. We must try and direct to peaceful purposes the resources and funds that are now being wasted East and West on outsize military arsenals. If young men are called up to work for these purposes, rather than join the army, everyone will benefit.

Armies commanding a staggering potential for devastation confront each other, bristling with weapons, in Europe. Peace movements East and West must take concerted action to put an end to this situation. After we have made certain that the political will of the nations for partnership and peaceful competition has the upper hand, we can get down to reducing these armies. The resulting social benefits for all the nations of Europe are self-evident.

Realistic proposals have been made to set up zones free of nuclear and chemical weapons, withdraw heavy armaments from some regions, and reduce military production and arms exports in a controlled way.

The peace movement in the Federal Republic of Germany is for the unrestricted right to refuse to do military service on moral grounds and emplolying draftees in social work, rather than having them goose-stepping or square-bashing. We are certain that the easing of East-West tensions paves the way to easing tension within the societies of both systems and releasing manpower, as well as ecological and economic resources.

The hopes of the human race must not be frustrated. We need the imagination of peace-minded people. At the end of last year several thousand groups of peace workers were active in the F.R.G. They are eager to establish contacts with like-minded groups in the Soviet Union and other socialist countries. We must help them do so, for there are few other ways to promote trust and strengthen peace. Weapons of war are our common enemy.

Travellers on the road

Galina Sidorova,
New Times special correspondent

In the black darkness of a Californian night, several dozen people holding candles and bells slowly made their way downhill. In the glade surrounded by hills, the participants in the Soviet-American Peace Walk had already gathered for their last farewell. The end-of-trail camp was lit by the lights flickering in the wind. But they did not go out.

Next day, in the airliner taking us back to Moscow no one slept, despite the feeling of tiredness. It seemed that a month had not been long enough to get to know each other, exchange impressions and talk about our discoveries. So had the Walk achieved its end? We had discovered America, and it had discovered us, and each of us had learnt a little more about himself.

In mocassins

"Grant that I do not criticize my neighbour until I have walked a mile in his mocassins," go the words of an Indian prayer. We had walked together for many a mile. And as we gradually got to know each other, we made more and more pleasant and unpleasant discoveries. The simplest one: perfect people and perfect nations do not exist. The difficulties in our relationships, which I wrote about in my previous report, had not disappeared. But in the course of this month we had learnt to understand what stood behind them and had, therefore, become more tolerant.

What did we learn about each other?

A few personal impressions.

For instance, it became clear almost immediately that many of the American participants were people without regular employment at that moment, often torturously seeking their place in life. Practically all the Soviet participants, from the accountant at a Tajik collective farm to an electronic engineer from Tallinn, were regarded by the Americans as yuppies – people with professions and regular incomes. The Americans regarded their own yuppies (in America, it's true, the term is only applied to the intellectual elite and highly-qualified specialists) with mistrust, let alone yuppies from other countries. However, the alienation on these grounds gradually evaporated.

We, in turn, began to understand that for the American leaders of the Walk, it was something of a joint Soviet-American venture and therefore a means of subsistence. I almost got used to the deliberately underlined scepticism of the American side's legal adviser Alan Gratch, who walking by my side regularly joked about the idealism of some of his countrymen, repeating "Well, we'll see what comes of it..."

The Americans discovered how far from easy it was to live in a family consisting of several dozen nationalities, each with their own traditions, culture and upbringing. The 220 Soviet participants in the Walk represented all the Union republics. A third of them had never travelled beyond the confines of their home region. For many this discovery of American civilization came as a distinct culture shock. Our trouble, though not our fault, is that at home we have no chance of tasting the fruits of abundance that they saw when occasionally they found themselves in an American shopping mall. I must concede that it was pathetic to see how in this uneasy situation some people's eyes grew bright. However, in the majority the plentitude of colours and goods aroused other thoughts, which they often shared with each other: how hard would we have to work at home back in our own town or republic for such abundance to appear in our shops!

For the Americans it came as some-

Continued. See beginning in No. 28

thing of a shock when the Soviet side ceased to be over-organized, as it had been at the beginning of the Walk and which they had criticized, and went over to relations based solely on trust. No one gave anyone any orders. Each behaved in keeping with his own conscience and sense of responsibility. Naturally, these qualities are not equally developed in everyone. Nevertheless, in my opinion it was these democratic relations that promoted the main thing – the creation of a normal atmosphere of good will on the Walk. The kind that usually develops in a family where relatives are not chosen and children can be both bad and good, eager to learn or refusing to.

Walking the roads of California

On that memorable last Californian candle-lit night, many cried. Americans in general, despite being very practical, are also very emotional. We as a rule are more restrained. This time no one would have been able to tell the difference. Each of us felt that we were leaving behind a colourful part of our life, never to be repeated.

Susan Howells' walk

During our journey Americans often asked me the same question: "What do you like most about America?" It is always hard to answer such a question in a few words. I like the American way of smiling left and right, simply because you happened to touch them or look their way. I like the American lack of constraint and simplicity in relations. I like their readiness to do you a service without expecting anything in return. I like their politeness and obligingness. All these are signs of a certain standard of living. At the same time, it is not universal. In New York's Harlem or the districts adjoining Philadelphia's Fairmount Park, one can hardly expect a smile from a passerby. America is so varied and contradictory. For myself, I have long understood one thing – my main discovery in that country has been and will be its people. The various events on the Walk, the names of towns and dates are linked in my mind with the names of the people I met there.

We probably became friends with 24-year-old Susan Howells from the very first day. An attractive, restrained girl, she stood out by virtue of the inner strength she seemed to possess and her readiness to learn, a trait not always to be found in her countrymen. Susan interested me also for another reason as well – her life is very typical of the present generation of well-off American young people who are so often accused of attaching too much importance to material possessions and careerism and lacking any other ideals.

Susan's family lives in a Chicago suburb. Her father is a businessman, her mother is in anti-cancer research. The Howells are well-off, not only because they have enough money, but also because of the good relations between parents and children.

Susan graduated from a college where she studied political sciences, and then became manageress of a small café. She felt that that way she would be able to find her feet and start an independent life more quickly. Her parents did not stand in her way. After a short stint at the café Susan gave up the job and decided to try herself out in politics. She joined the staff of Michael Dukakis' election campaigners, working for him in Iowa. She phoned and met potential voters, calling on them to cast their vote for Dukakis. After spending some time with the campaigners, Susan explained, she came to the conclusion that politicians pay too little thought to the usefulness of their programmes; all they want is power, and that she didn't like. And then from one of her friends she heard about our Walk and immediately she was fired with a desire to take part in it. However, without her parents' financial support, it would have been impossible.

"What was your reaction to your daughter's wish," I asked her father when the Howells drove over one week-end to see what was happening on the Walk.

Mr Howells acknowledged that at the beginning he was rather cautious. To lay down 2,500 dollars on the table not knowing exactly what for. But Susan convinced them. As for the idea, he said, I myself have often told Susan that we Americans should offer a hand of friendship to other peoples and cultures. In the past people of different nationalities came to America as immigrants. Many tried to leave their own cultural heritage far from its shores. We are not receptive to alien cultures, we fence ourselves off from them. Our attitude is that everything American is best. But now that no longer holds good. I think Susan will learn a lot from the Walk.

Susan did not hear what her Father had told me. But when I asked her before our departure about the Walk, she repeated his words.

"We have learnt a lot. There were problems, but now we have the experience. I would have liked more discussions. At times we didn't have time to talk to each other. Where were we to find time for dis-

cussions when we were not always able to find time to feed people normally and administer simple first aid.

"And I have also learned something for myself and about myself. I now know that I want to become a lawyer and that I shall go to law school."

"In spite of everything, do you think we got to know each other better?"

"Yes, without any doubt. We've done that. I couldn't get to know all the Soviet participants, or even all the American ones. But with some we have become real friends, despite all the cultural differences."

"Is there anything that makes it difficult for you to get along with the Russians and achieve understanding?"

"The language barrier, of course. Plus a proboably purely American trait – we seek to establish close personal contacts quickly. I would even say we are aggressively friendly. You are more restrained. You approach friendship much more slowly, but then it goes deeper."

"At the beginning of the Walk there was a lot of talk about disenchantment. Does that feeling persist?"

"I did feel a certain disenchantment. But now I realize how naive it was to expect to be able to build an ideal American-Soviet community in just one month. If that were possible, there would have been no problems at all between our two countries. During the Walk we didn't have the time to be together more. However, everything we went through together gives me a warm feeling towards all my comrades – American and Soviet.

"We were constantly on the move, and coping with all the everyday problems of living, we at times lost the feeling of what we were really accomplishing. When outsiders appeared in our camps they usually exclaimed in surprise: 'Just think of it, Soviets and Americans together in tents!' Like my parents."

"And after that they agreed to finance your trip to the Soviet Union at the end of this summer with other Americans for a walk through the Ukraine?" (I remember how Susan flew over to me to tell me this news when her parents came to visit).

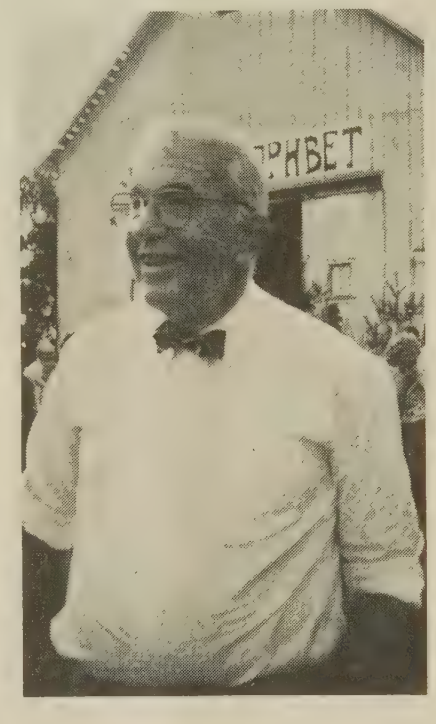
"And what do you think was the reaction to our Walk of those Americans who came to our camp each day even if it was fairly far away from the nearest town?"

"Many people are sick and tired of the arms race, its economic and moral pressures. They are tired of all the talk about wars, big and small alike. They are ripe for change and accept any signs of it with satisfaction. One such sign was our Walk..."

Like Susan I noticed changes in Americans. I did not miss the traditional indifference of people living in big cities. Probably what was new to me was not that many Americans, especially in Iowa, showed us interest and attention, but that few displayed open displeasure or disapproval. On many occasions I asked my American friends to introduce me to an ill-wisher. But the ill-wishers always had more important things to do.

How are things with you? Will it last?

No less unexpected for me was the sincere interest in the Soviet Union. This interest almost overwhelmed the Soviet participants when the 19th Party Conference was in session. To tell the truth, we were a bit annoyed at being so far away from the main events in our country. But



John Crystal advises greater enthusiasm in carrying out decisions

one has to admit that the American mass media, both national and local, was full of reports from Moscow. Our main task was to get to a TV set. To watch and guess even from the faces of the delegates, if there was no sound track, the passion and heated tone of the discussions in the hall.

A question that was put to us several times daily during the conference was: how are things with you? Will it last? And as a rule the question was put almost anxiously, not with any intention of rejoicing at another's misfortune.

It was during those busy days that I met a man who is not only a legend in his home state of Iowa, but far beyond its borders. One evening our camp was visited by John Crystal, a businessman and Chairman of the Bankers' Trust of Des Moines, a nephew of Roswell Garst, whose farm Nikita Khrushchev visited during his famous tour of the United States. Crystal himself was a farmer in his youth and he met Khrushchev at his uncle's place. Then he came regularly to the Soviet Union on business trips. He has met Mikhail Gorbachev many times.

When I asked how that period of better Soviet-American relations differed from the current one, John Crystal laughed and replied:

"Khrushchev impressed many people by his lack of restraint, his brusqueness and artlessness. For Americans he was in a sense a man from another planet. Gorbachev attracts people by his education, intellect and charisma. He is a flexible politician who knows perfectly well what he wants. Many people here are not sure of his future. But I am. Would you like an imperfect example from the field of political longevity? Under the present President, Iowa was plunged into its hardest times. Yet four years later, the people of the state again gave him their votes in the elections...

"As for American-Soviet relations, they now rest on a more stable foundation. They are developing in many directions."

"How do you see the future, our common future?"

"The arms race is doomed. We are doomed to economic rivalry in which West Germany and Japan will join."

"And what will be the main factor in Soviet-American realtions?"

"Trade. It humanizes relations, because it presupposes contacts, personal ties and thus helps build trust. For progress in this field you will, in my view, have to look hard for markets and produce goods that will find buyers and be competitive. Obviously, the question of a convertible ruble will come up. The American side will have to make serious revisions in its trade legislation.

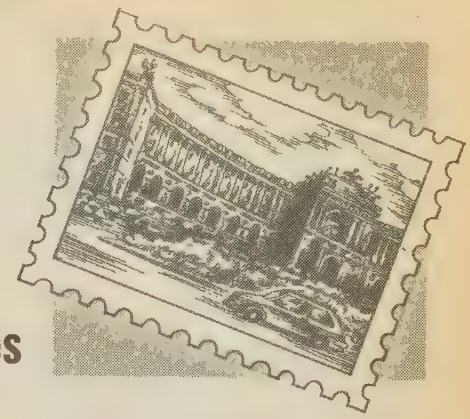
"In general, I would call supermaterialism our main shortcoming. As for you, I would wish you greater enthusiasm in carrying out the decisions adopted..."

That the problem of future Soviet-American relations is part of everyday life in John Crystal's home state is not accidental. Nor was the impact made there by our Walk.

Des Moines–San Francisco–Moscow

(to be continued)

Photos by author



Again of paragraphs, useful and harmful

Ambassador Yuri Kashlev writes to New Times political analyst Lev Bezymensky

Dear Lev Alexandrovich,

Having read your commentary "Of paragraphs, useful and harmful" (N.T. No. 28), I sincerely welcome your interest in the European talks taking place in the Austrian capital, as in general I support the extension of glasnost to diplomatic negotiations.

Indeed, the Vienna session of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, the third since Helsinki, has been somewhat protracted, often seeming to stand still, and lags behind the new dynamics of European life.

We are indeed discussing too many paragrahs, as you called them. I can put that more clearly by saying that the draft of the final document consists of more than 200 paragraphs – 80 pages of text. But there is nothing one can do about it, such are the specific and unique features of European conferences which, unlike others, have to consider the whole complex of relations between the 35 participating countries: political, military, trade and economic, scientific and technical, ecological and humanitarian. Plus a separate chapter on the Mediterranean. Plus a programme for future European conferences, meetings of experts, and so on. At present we are working on the agendas for 12 major measures in the listed fields over the next 3-4 years. All these questions are considered by six editing bodies of the Vienna meeting, working in parallel and holding from 14 to 22 meetings a week. Add to this the existing democratic rule of the Conference – consensus, which means that all 35 countries have to agree to each paragraph, indeed each word.

All that is not a justification for the slow progress, merely description of our activity. The socialist countries are constantly seeking to step up the pace and effectiveness of the work.

Because of the protracted discussion on the various baskets at the Vienna meeting, practical talks on the reduction of armed forces and conventional armaments in Europe from the Atlantic to the Urals have not yet begun. Their terms of reference, which we are drafting, form part of the final document of the Vienna meeting. And progress on these terms of reference is slow. A number of leading NATO countries are in effect seeking a unilateral reduction of troops and armaments by the Warsaw Treaty countries, and are trying to leave loopholes that would permit them to modernize and build up their armaments, as well as to exclude from the talks the so-called dual-purpose weapons capable of carrying either a conventional or a nuclear warhead (for instance, tactical aircraft). Naturally, the Warsaw Treaty countries cannot agree to this.

Nevertheless it has already been decided that such talks will begin this year, with 23 Warsaw Treaty and NATO countries taking part. They will be held in parallel with the next stage of the Stockholm conference in which all 35 countries will participate. Incidentally, the terms of reference for that conference have also been agreed on at the Vienna meeting.

With one point in your commentary, permit me to disagree – likewise in the spirit of glasnost. You write, and use the Vienna talks as an example, of the divorce of diplomatic activity from real life in Europe.

But can one describe the numerous problems under discussion at the European conference as mere "diplomatic activity?", I have already mentioned the military questions affecting all the European peoples. The Helsinki second "basket", which we are discussing, covers the elimination of trade barriers, conditions for businessmen, the legal regulation of safety measures in the nuclear power industry, cooperation in protecting the ozone layer of the Earth, compensation deals, joint ventures. Surely that can't be called a divorce of diplomacy from life? Incidentally, the Soviet delegation is not made up solely of diplomats, but also includes representatives of ministries and departments.

And the third "basket?" Dozens of new agreements on culture (as, for instance, the opening of cultural centres in other countries), on information (including journalists' working conditions), education, contacts between people (including the reunification of families, tourism, marriages between citizens of different countries) – these aren't merely diplomatic matters surely, but are designed for the people themselves.

In general, the result of the Vienna meeting looks like being a breakthrough in the humanitarian field – switching its problems from the former arena of confrontation to the sphere of civilized cooperation. And that could well be no less important than new talks on disarmament. Frankly speaking, experience confirms that genuine disarmament without mutual trust is unrealistic.

Of course no talks, here in Vienna or elsewhere, can be a substitute for real life, real cooperation between peoples and countries. But they do expand the framework for such cooperation, promote what the 19th CPSU Conference called the "livening up" of the General European process.

Where I am in agreement with you, Lev Alexandrovich, is that the public and the press should devote more attention to such talks as the Vienna ones. What is needed are discussions, comments, delegations and petitions. We can't complain that no statesmen or public leaders come to Vienna. The conference and the numerous journalists accredited to it have been addressed by the Minister of Justice Boris Kravtsov, the Prosecutor-General Alexander Sukharev, members of the U.S.S.R. Supreme Soviet, and also such well-known personalities as Chingiz Aitmatov, Tenghiz Abuladze, Fyodor Burlatsky, Yegor Yakovlev, Evgeny Primakov, Samuil Zivs, Andrei Kokoshkin, Metropolitan Juvenaly, journalists Valentin Falin, Stanislav Kondrashov, Vsevolod Ovchinnikov and a number of others. There have been delegations from the World Peace Council, the Soviet Committee for European Security and Cooperation and other peace organizations. With them and without them, the Soviet delegation has held about 50 press conferences in Vienna. But members of West European parliaments, parties, legal, religious and even anticommunist organizations come much more frequently and in greater numbers. They meet regularly with the various delegations and seek to influence the course of negotaitions. There is also an endless stream of petitions from the Western countries.

And of course, the West European press writes about the Vienna talks and the problems discussed, and unfortunately, it writes much more than does our own press.

So you could say that I have used the opportunity offered by your commentary to make up for this at least a little.

Sincerely,
Yuri Kashlev,
Head of the U.S.S.R. delegation to the CSCE Vienna meeting

One shot can

Igor Timofeyev

The presidential election is approaching in Lebanon. It is of no great importance, however, who the next head of state will be. The most urgent need is to put an end to the protracted internecine war.

Under the "national pact" adopted in the autumn of 1943, the President of Lebanon was to be elected from among the Maronites, the most important community at the time. The post of premier was given to the Sunnites, that of president of the parliament to the Shiites, deputies to the premier and the president of the parliament were to be Orthodox Christians, and so on. Each community had its quota of representation at all levels in the state apparatus, depending on its size and political influence.

The President's authority

Since the 1932 census had shown the Maronites to be the largest single community, the principal levers of power went to them. The most significant of these was, of course, the monopoly on the presidency.

The head of state, elected by parliament for a six-year term, enjoys such broad powers that many experts describe Lebanon as a presidential republic. It is also important that only a Maronite politician acceptable to Christians and Muslims alike can hope to be elected president.

The civil war has appreciably damaged the prestige of the presidency. Elias Sarkis, who became President at the height of the armed conflict in 1976, still tried to rise above the feuds and maintain the image of a supreme authority concerned with the interests of all communities. Amin Gemayel has proved unable to abandon his confessional sympathies. In a divided society the President's possibilities of influencing the course of events have materially diminished and his real power has begun to shrink.

Nevertheless, the Lebanese are impatiently awaiting the presidential election, traditionally held at the end of the summer. Some of them still cherish the idea of a "strong president" and look to the election for the realization of their hopes for rehabilitation and, consequently, maintenance of the confessional system. Others continue to believe that a President can still take the edge off the internal discord and bring about national concord. Still others, insisting on the abolition of confessionalism, regard participation in the election as a compromise that would help preserve the fragile balance and resume dialogue on future structural changes at a round table and not on the battlefield.

The problem is that, with the political forces divided into opposing extremes, it is very difficult, if not impossible, to find a candidate acceptable to all parties in the civil war. The situation is further complicated by the fact that the parliament, elected as far back as 1972, no longer adequately reflects the alignment of political forces in the country. Moreover, only 76 of the 99 deputies have managed to survive over the past 16 years. President Gemayel himself escaped death by a hair's breadth on July 17 when gunmen fired on him and members of his family on a beach north of Juniye.

Lastly, today it is impossible to say with certainty that the election will be held or even be held on time. Any complication of the situation in Lebanon or

Devastation and growth.

start a war

the Middle East could influence the course and results of the election or, worse, scuttle it completely.

Prospective candidates

The decision of the Progressive Socialist Party (PSP) to put forward a presidential candidate came as a surprise to political circles. At a meeting attended by prominent statesmen and politicians, as well as many newsmen, the Maronite candidate from the PSP, Antoine Ashqar, outlined his programme envisaging the abolition of the confessional system and the implementation of broad democratic reforms.

President

Amin GEMAYEL

Total loyality is impossible

A Socialist Maronite candidate is unlikely to be accepted by right-wing Maronite circles. The unexpected move by the PSP's chairman Walid Jumblatt, resented by some political circles, demonstrated, on the one hand, good will on the part of the national patriotic forces as well as their flexibility for the sake of achieving national concord and preserving the territorial integrity of Lebanon and, on the other, imparted a new dimension to the forthcoming election campaign by reintroducing the programme of reforms advanced by Kamal Jumblatt back in 1976. In the opinion of democrats and others on the left the programme is capable of ending the protracted civil war in Lebanon.

Dany Chamoun, leader of the National Liberals' Party, was the first to announce his intention to run for the presidency. He is a son of former president Camille Chamoun, known for his ties with the United States and Israel, an ideologist of "Lebanism," the concept of the "special character" of Lebanon, which envisages its estrangement from pan-Arab solidarity and orientation towards the West. Dany Chamoun has not yet advanced a clearly defined political programme.

Next to come forward as a candidate was Farouq Abu-Lama, an independent politician and director-general at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Farouq Abu-Lama is an experienced politician. He held key posts in the Lebanese intelligence service and, thanks to his position, had close ties in the presidential palace.

Recently one further contender, Favzi Bardavil, a former governor of Southern Lebanon, declared his intention to run for president. Raymond Edde, a possible candidate from the National Bloc Party, is believed to have good chances of success. A member of parliament for the constituency of Jbeyel, he now lives in Paris. The right-wing liberal Edde does not conceal his dedication to the idea of reforms, which he thinks necessary to bring the internal situation back to normal.

Also good are the chances of Michel Edde, a distant relative of Raymond Edde, one of the richest men in Lebanon, a right-wing liberal holding technocratic views. Due to his broad ties with diverse political forces, Michel Edde is often called "multicoloured." Next to him in chances of success is Henri Sfair, a real estate magnate who advocates close ties between Lebanon and the United States.

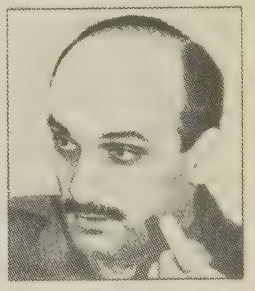
As the election approaches, other presidential contenders are appearing on the political scene. But even today the Lebanese press devotes considerable attention to two "strong men" who hold key positions in the conservative camp. One of them is Michel Aun, commander of the Lebanese Army, who enjoys great influence in military circles. The other is Samir Djadja, leader of the Lebanese Forces, who came to the fore in the country's political life in the early 1980s and does little to conceal his desire to bring the right-wing Christian forces under his control.

President Gemayel is naturally worried by Djadja's dictatorial inclinations, as after leaving his post he can reasonably claim a leading role in the Lebanese Phalangist Party (Kataeb) which was founded by his father, and, accordingly, in the Lebanese Forces made up of that party's armed formations. Amin Gemayel would like to see a President who does not have strong position in the Kataeb. The future leader of the party and the Lebanese Forces could then exert pressure on the President and play the part of "éminence grise" in his entourage.

Power struggle in the Christian enclave

The power struggle in the Christian enclave erupted immediately after the first stage of the civil war ended in the autumn of 1976. It has become particularly acute within the Lebanese Front, an alliance of right-wing Christian political parties formed in December 1976 as a counterweight to the National Patriotic Forces and Parties Front led by Kamal Jumblatt, then chairman of the Progressive Socialist Party.

Samir DJADJA



The unlucky presidential aspirant is not going to sit idle

Having set their sights on creating a Christian mini-state with Israel's help and thus dividing the country, in the

summer of 1979 the Phalangists routed one of the outposts of former President Franjiya, who had spoken in favour of an alliance with Syria and the preservation of national unity, and killed his son Tony with his wife and daughter. Two years later the Kataeb militia staged a massacre in the headquarters of the National Liberals' Party leader Camille Chamoun, effectively wiping out the party's armed formations.

The 1982 Israeli aggression inspired the Phalangists with hope. They switched from their plan to establish a mini-state to the maximum programme advanced by their leader Bashir Gemayel. The programme envisaged the complete hegemony of the Maronites over the entire territory of Lebanon. But Bashir Gemayel never assumed presidential office. He was killed in September 1982. However, the programme jointly elaborated by him with Tel Aviv proved so attractive to the Phalangists and, in particular, to his close associate Samir Djadja, that in the summer of 1982 they moved units of the Lebanese Forces into the Israeli-occupied mountainous regions of Shouf and Aley, traditionally controlled by the PSP and the national patriotic forces.

As is well known, Bashir Gemayel's plan went awry. In the autumn of 1983 the Israelis were compelled to leave Shouf and Aley. Reliance on Tel Aviv's strength proved illusory. Having given up any hope of establishing Maronite control over the whole of Lebanon, Samir Djadja accepted the concept of "political decentralization." This meant, in fact, reviving the old idea of Balkanizing the country on a confessional basis. Djadja began to put this idea into effect in January 1986, by which time he had managed to remove a number of his rivals and become sole leader of the Lebanese Forces.

By then the situation in the Christian sector had changed appreciably. Sober politicians, including the influential Maronite Patriarch B. Sfair, had been speaking out more often in favour of a more moderate policy aimed at achieving national concord and preserving the unity and territorial integrity of Lebanon. The split in East Beirut had been caused, in particular, by the growing opposition of the Kataeb leadership oriented on Amin Gemayel, and that of the Lebanese army command, to Djadja's obvious desire to gain military and political supremacy, and establish a personal dictatorship in the Christian sector of the country.

On April 13, exactly thirteen years since the start of the civil war in Lebanon, Samir Djadja held a sort of review of the forces – a graduation ceremony at the Bashir Gemayel military school. Among those invited to the ceremony were key figures in the right-wing Christian establishment whose presence was to symbolize their recognition of the dominant role of the Lebanese Forces and Djadja himself.

But the political show devised by Djadja proved a complete fiasco. The ceremony was attended by only three members of parliament and a representative of the National Liberals' Party leader Dany Chamoun, who had decided not to attend in person. Infuriated by the absence of many of those he had invited, Samir Djadja delivered a harangue filled with threats against "traitors" and "renegades." But it seems that his philippic failed to impress Maronite political circles.

The internal contradictions in the Christian sector had peaked by this summer, though, in the opinion of students of Lebanese politics, these contradictions should not be overdramatized. In the past, Maronite politicians have more than once demonstrated their ability to unite at crucial moments. Furthermore, and much more importantly, few people in Lebanon believe that right-wing Christian leaders can take political decisions independently.

"It is not very important which presidential candidate wins," a left-wing journalist told me. "The future President will inevitably be merely a symbol of compromise between the internal and external forces and be unable to lift a finger without their consent."

The domino principle

An ordinary Lebanese sometimes finds it difficult to unravel the tangle of interparty relations. The situation changes often and abruptly. Forces allied in the morning have begun to fight each other towards evening. Only the parties involved in each new conflict know the reasons for it, though not invariably, so.

That is why many Lebanese today are turning their attention to international events rather than to the discord in East Beirut. They believe that George Shultz's diplomatic activity in the Middle East, the promotion of American-Syrian contacts, the Palestinian uprising in the occupied territories, and, of course, the Gorbachev-Reagan meeting in Moscow could create a qualitatively new situation in the region that may be conducive to the settlement of the protracted Lebanese conflict.

The Lebanese have long been used to the fact that the internal situation is always linked, by threads both visible and invisible, with the external situation. For centuries British and French diplomats, Papal nuncios, Jesuit missionaries, preachers from various orders and sects have been so busily engaged in Lebanese affairs that the constant participation of foreigners in the tackling of domestic problems has become the norm.

Lebanon's dependence on the external situation is felt particularly today. The presence of Syrian troops maintaining peace and public order has certainly helped stabilize the internal situation. At the same time, it has prevented the adoption of important political decisions, including the election of the President, without consultations with Damascus. Everyone in Lebanon feels Damascus breathing down their necks. This irritates some people. However, even those hostile to Syria are compelled to admit that they cannot do without its assistance.

Indeed, Syria, as the only Arab country in a state of direct confrontation with Tel Aviv, considerably limits Israel's opportunities to put pressure on Lebanon and, in a way, serves as a guarantor of its territorial integrity. On the other hand, the Syrian-Israeli confrontation in Lebanon is a further reminder that the civil war in that country has long been part of the Middle East conflict and that the Lebanese situation is unlikely to be settled without a comprehensive solution of the Middle East problem.

It is also important that, besides the occupation of Southern Lebanon, Tel Aviv today has a pro-Israeli lobby in the Lebanese Forces. This enables it to influence political decision-making in the Christian zone.

Lastly, the shuttle mediation of the United States in the region for over 15 years, as well as its special relationship with Tel Aviv and its traditional ties with a number of influential Lebanese politicians, leave no doubt of the fact that Washington can also play a major part in the choice of President.

Quite recently the Syrians helped put an end to the fierce clashes between the two rival Shiite militias in South Beirut. Earlier, Israeli troops invaded the Bekaa Valley. Tel Aviv is likely to exert new pressure on the eve of the election, as happened in 1982, when parliament voted for Gemayel almost at Israeli gun-point.

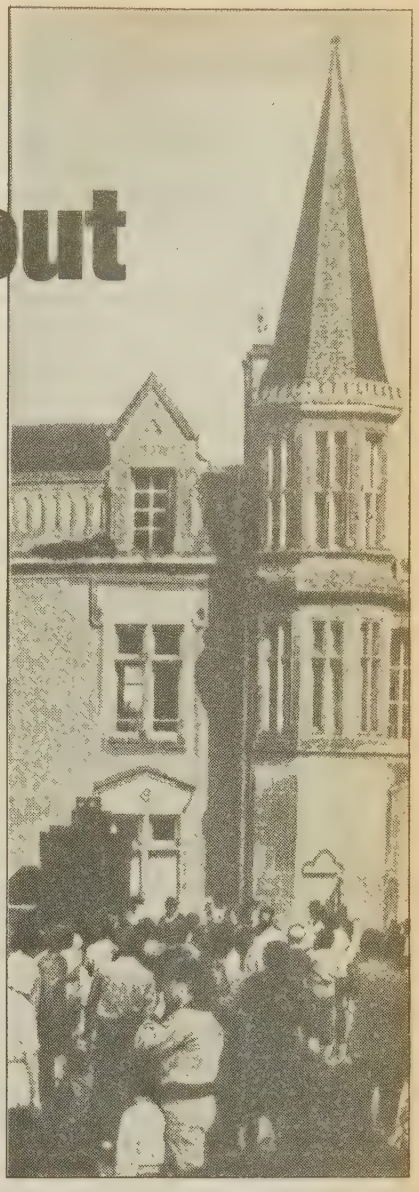
"Rain begins with a single drop, war with a single shot." This proverb is often recalled today in Lebanon where, as in no other country, the domino principle works instantly. The Lebanese fear that even a slight pressure could set the whole chain in motion, and then it will again take years to restore what collapses in a moment.

BEIRUT-MOSCOW

Councils – with and without Communists

New look at an old subject

From our special correspondent
Vitaly Ganyushkin



Hérouville–Saint-Clair, a satellite town.

The Land of Soviets, and we, the Soviet people, are concepts of which we are traditionally proud. But I don't think our pride will suffer if we recall that the very idea of Soviets was not our invention, nor that of our ancestors. They were known to the Paris Commune. That too is something to be proud of.

But the question today is: what did their councils and our Soviets develop into? Our own we now know, and so once again the banner with the slogan "All power to the Soviets!" is being raised aloft. With good reason. And in their case? That was what I set out to discover on my first ever visit to France. A home-grown interest. We have been unable to make good so far. How has it been with them?

I "investigated this problem" in Normandy's Calvados, where I was surrounded by the most businesslike and personal hospitality of the local branch of the France-U.S.S.R. Association headed by Guy Parnot (my profound gratitude to them). I met and talked with fifteen executives of three municipal councils, including three mayors. I can't say that I understood everything down to the last detail, but then dozens of treatises have been written about the French system of local self-government. But I did learn a lot. I found comfort in a remark made by one of those I talked to: to tell the truth, we don't know everything ourselves.

The best of what there is?

For many long years the French were burdenend by the central government's authority over local bodies of self-government. Indeed, until recently municipal councils and the Mayor himself were unable to lift a finger without approval from the centre. Especially as the Mayor was a sort of middleman between the supreme authorities and his own community, combining in his person both administrative and elected power, and to which of the two he gave his loyalty depended largely on his personality. In reply to pressure from below, the top resorted to ever new devious moves to restrict local selfgovernment.

It is now believed that an end has been put to this. When the Socialists under Francois Mitterrand came to power, they succeeded in putting through a law on the rights and freedoms of communes, departments and regions, which is commonly known as the law of decentralization. It was undoubtedly a progressive and timely measure that gave local initiative a free hand and greatly democratized both the electoral system and the work of local selfgovernment bodies. For instance, the post of departmental Prefect was abolished. In the past the Prefect was responsible for implementing the policy of the central administration. Now his functions were turned over to the chairman of the general council of the department, which are elected bodies. That in itself is called upon to ensure that local interests, i.e., the interests of the electorate, are given priority.

A similar change took place at the lower levels – in the communes. Their councils also received the widest rights to decide local issues and greater financial independence. And the one who holds the purse strings in effect wields power.

Now it looks as if that purse has passed into the hands of elected, not administrative bodies (or as we would say, the apparatus), which is of course in the interests of the electorate. But from the point of view of the Communists, not everything has been completely settled on that disputed issue. Criticizing the weaker points of the law, they point out that departments, as well as communes, will not be able to function effectively until at least 30 per cent of the state's tax revenue is placed at their disposal (at present they get 15-20 per cent).

Hérouville-Saint-Clair is a satellite town of the capital of the Calvados department, Caen. It sprang up 20 years ago on the site of a small settlement to house workers at the new Renault and Citroen plants, as well as factories producing household goods. Lower Normandy, which used to be a traditionally agricultural area, was turned into an industrial one. Today the town is one of the youngest in France: the average age of the population is 34. The man we spoke to – the head of the Mayor's office Philippe Bernard – is also young.

"The 1982 law," he said, "has not freed the Mayor from the central authorities, but it has changed his status: now he repre-

sents the interests of the commune at government level, and control over the local council's activities has been considerably reduced. If in the past any council decision needed approval from above, now the state practically does not interfere and can only appeal against the actions of the Mayor through a tribunal if they are unlawful. Like the council, the Mayor has considerable rights. All day-to-day issues he decides together with his deputies, the number of which is proportional to the size of the population (we have 10 – and all are elected members of the council). One could compare it with a mini-government: the Mayor as Prime Minister, and his deputies as ministers. They meet once a week. Reports on their discussions as well as on council meetings are published by the press.

"Apart from the 35 elected councillors, we have a staff of about 600 – officials and technical workers, usually skilled and competent specialists who run all the affairs of the commune. Any person living in the area can come to the council with his needs, and if a staff member is unable to help, then he takes his case to the appropriate committee.

"Our municipal council has traditionally been left-wing, with a Socialist Mayor at its head. But the department as a whole is in the hands of the right-wing parties. That of course restricts our options and now even more than before the adoption of the law. Because, if in the past we could appeal straight to the government, even a right-wing one, by-passing the lower echelons, now we have to go through them.

"On the whole, we believe the law needs to be improved further, ensuring people the possibility of more effective participation in running the affairs of the commune. We see the way to this in our council through the broad representation of public organizations of different political and social trends. In our town alone there are more than 150 – so you can just imagine the wealth of ideas and initiatives they hold. But so far they can't get anywhere, because they lack the money, not to mention the legislative powers. And the attitude towards them differs: we Socialists and Communists try to do everything together with them, while in other places no one even talks to them.

"In general, I believe that bureaucracy is an inevitable component in any state. So the main question is: what power does it possess? Here real power belongs to the people in the person of their elected representatives, although the slogan 'All power to the councils!' is not on our agenda. Nor can there be any limits to the perfection of democracy."

It produces a strange feeling – this new thinking. You, a Soviet citizen, are talking to a foreigner. He is left-wing, a Socialist, but still not one of us. Not so very long ago I would have been obliged to nail all this bourgeois pseudodemocracy to the wall with the cornerstones of our social sciences, which had been stuffed into us from our student days. In fact, I had no right even to be interested in this pseudodemocracy, except to expose its "real essence." What we had and were doing was progressive, and anything elsewhere wasn't even worth knowing about. We have paid a high price for this sclerotic attitude. Now we have to catch up, learn from our own experience, but from them too. And so I found myself sitting with them (there were Gaullists, Centrists, Liberals...) asking questions, interested in finding out, and there's no question of describing it as "pseudo."

And I heard more sensible words that day in the atmosphere of an editorial office I'm used to from a fellow journalist, the editor-in-chief of the local paper Ouest-France, Jean-Claude Champion.

"Any voter can attend the meetings of the committees, and only the plenary meetings are held in camera. But the basic decisions are usually taken at open sessions, with journalists invited to attend. Documents for a forthcoming discussion are made available to editorial offices in advance. The time, place and agenda of such meetings are announced in the press. The debate itself is also covered by the newspapers, giving all the different views. It can happen that even before a discussion a political group will call a press conference and protest in advance against the forthcoming decisions. That too is published. The papers also control the implementing of decisions taken. For instance, now we are publishing the replies given by the people to our poll "said-done," in which they give their views on how much of the plan promised for the past five years has been implemented.

"Our society is one of private initiative and private enterprise. Naturally, the local authorities should seek to do their best for all in equal measure. Up to 1982, the central structures paralyzed the local ones. For instance, the construction of new projects was their exclusive prerogative. Now such matters are decided by the Mayor and council; the state only watches to see that everything is legal... But there should be no delusions: bureaucracy – be it French, Russian, Chinese or Papuan – is the same everywhere. Civil servants seek to preserve and strengthen their positions and put a brake on any innovations. And so you find that while the 1982 law is progressive, its application in practice is not always what was intended. What's more, there is a danger inherent in decentralization itself – at local level there can be distortions too. Those responsible will not be re-elected, but their deeds remain.

"Probably no laws are perfect, they always leave room somewhere or other for misinterpretation. The only antidote is a pluralism of views. But here too a question arises: for good power you need the right kind of people – each procession, as the saying goes, needs its saints. In France, and especially in Normandy, there are thousands upon thousands of people who are dissatisfied, and that means there are plenty of unresolved problems – where can one find the happy medium?

"Decentralization of self-government was not the idea of any one party, but was prompted by experience itself. I regard the French administrative system as the most perfect. But it too is oppressive. I belong to no party, but watching the present Socialists in power I get the feeling that they are creating a threat to themselves by following the policies determined before 1981. France has changed since then. It is ill. Not on its deathbed, but still ill. And each doctor offers his own method of treatment, but they differ little from one another. So far nothing radically new has been suggested..."

Who lives well in the commune

Communists I spoke to told me that they were seeking to reduce the vast gap between the minimum and maximum wage of different categories of working people. There are cases of people earning fifty times more than others! And all of them live in the commune. How can one seek to find a balance of interests in such circumstances? Attempts are made, but each political force is trying in its own way.

In Hérouville, for instance, where one person in four is a student, they have tried to tackle France's most acute problem today, that of unemployment. Naturally, the ranks of the unemployed are swelled mostly by youngsters, who have just finished secondary school and have practically no vocational training. And with the passage of time what they learned at school is gradually forgotten. In Hérouville, every second unemployed person is under twenty. How can they be helped?

Special public committees have been set up under the municipal councils. In Hérouville the committee chose its own form of social awakening for these young people – by setting up educational groups of a sort where the youngsters are brought up to school-leaving levels and then given rudimentary vocational training. More than 5,000 youngsters have passed through such groups in three years. A vocational school for 500 youngsters was opened to train them for the services industry. Contacts were arranged with secondary schools, so that there too elementary vocational training should be given.

And then what? To that question no one could offer any worthwhile answer. The committee in Hérouville is the only one of its kind in Lower Normandy, and in all of France there are not more than 100. It depends on whether the left or the right predominate in the municipal councils. But even the left-wing forces are unable to offer radical solutions to the poroblems of the young. They will spur on a number of youngsters to an independent life. But can such home-grown groups achieve a lot, and secondly, what can they do for their students afterwards? For there are still no jobs to offer them. Yet, as the Deputy Mayor of Hérouville, Michel Virengue, a Communist, noted, this "social waste"

among the young provides a breeding ground for the supporters of Le Pen's National Front.

I tried to sow the idea of polytechnical education on a national scale. It's true that in recent years vocational training has been introduced in many schools, and there are more lyceés with a professional technical orientation. But a compulsory state programme as such is non-existent. As are any radical steps designed to create new jobs. Rather the reverse. The number of jobs is decreasing and the people I talked to were inclined to blame policies, which are relegating France to a role that could be described as the European park of culture and rest.

The town of Giberville has a high concentration of industry, but when it comes to jobs it is growing poorer and poorer all the time. Eight years ago the copper-smelting plant employed 15,000 men. Today it employs only 2,500. There too one finds many youngsters who have come up against impassable barriers on the threshold of adult life. There the battle is on not for further education groups, but for the copper-smelting plant to increase production, not to cut if back all the time. The town council together with the trade unions conducted its own analysis to counter that carried out by the employers and proved that the prospects for increasing production were very real.

That's because the municipal council is traditionally a Communist-led one. Their Socialist opponents say: You should rejoice that the plant hasn't been closed down altogether. And if a plant is closed down, rejoice that it is sited elsewhere, not in your town. The Communists are seeking to preserve metallurgical plants everywhere in the country. Their goals run counter to EEC strategy and their neighbours have sufficiently hard elbows.

I asked Communists I spoke to a rather tricky question: they are working for the interests of the working class, but who in today's France do they consider to be the working class? After a short but fruitful discussion the answer I got was: "Those who do not agree with their employers."

The Giberville municipal council has been on the left since 1967, up till when it had been in the hands of the right. Eighteen of the 27 council members are Communists, the rest – Socialists and representatives of the right. The Mayor, Jean-Francois Romy, was re-elected for a second term – a rare occurrence. He carries out his duties as Mayor as a public service. Actually, he is entitled to a salary, but in keeping with party decisions, Communists holding elected posts turn their salary over to the party. Romy lives on the money he earns as a teacher of French and the Arts at a local school. He is extremely busy, with no time to spare, because, apart from everything else, he and his wife have fostered two orphan children. So how do he and his associates defend the interests of the working class?

"Our budget," he explained, "is made up of several sources of revenue. But we count most on taxes on property and employers. We seek to make the most we can from capital and take the least from the population. Moreover, the property tax is different for the different categories of the population, because many workers have built their own homes, but as a rule they were able to do so by economizing strictly on everything else and even sometimes going without essentials. In other words, since the council decides the tax policy and we are in the majority there, we have increased taxes on employers to the highest permissible legal level... Naturally, if workers undertake any protest action, we side with them, and force the employers to make concessions. All major decisions affecting the commune are taken after extensive public discussions.

We also seek reasonable differences in earnings – not that a person should earn 50 times more than another, but say just five times. We Communists were the only ones in the National Assembly who opposed the proposal that employers have the right to sack workers as they see fit. We also opposed flexible payments (that is payment of wages only when a plant has work, or an order). In other words, the concepts of exploiter and exploited remain valid.

The poverty level and features of poverty

New people and new impressions all the time. I find myself constantly involved in a dialogue with my inner voice. People of my generation were brought up to believe the simplistic view – everything in our country is good, everything across the border is bad. Once you've learnt and accepted that, you will be regarded as morally stable and politically mature, your promotion is assured and you will have no troubles. You will even be permitted to go abroad. On one condition: not a word about what you have seen. For even in the years when the policy was not to let people go abroad, the few selected, who supposedly could not be tempted went abroad, bought things and enjoyed life there, but on their return told us about the hardships and slums.

Now it looks as if things are slightly different and the optimal verdict is – there, too, things are bad... That is already progress. It's closer to the truth. To the evident fact that mankind as a whole has so far not found or at least has been unable to put into practice the universally beneficial idea of a good life for all. Socialism claimed and claims that as its goal, but it seems that it,

President François Mitterrand attended the new municipal council's opening ceremony in Hérouville.

too, has been unable to attain it despite all its obvious advantages.

But what about the homes for which the Communist town councillors of Giberville are seeking social justice? I had occasion to visit such a home. A two-storey house with a dozen rooms built from fine solid materials with a basement garage and a garden. Fully equipped and supplied. The owners of this property were that selfsame electrician from the nearby Renault plant, Guy Parnot, and his wife Marcelle, also an activist in the France – U.S.S.R. Association. Two years ago she was treacherously fired while she was ill and she is still seeking justice. Yes, capitalism is not sleeping. But the couple do have their own house, as well as a car, their daughter has her own home, and they have everything they need. One can state confidently that in our country there is no electrician with a two-storey home, a car, and a jobless wife. That is, if theft is not one of his sidelines. Well, "over there," if a person works he lives well. In our country, there were (and still are) cases when those who live well do not work.

You might ask – and what has the form of government to do with it – the power of the councils (or Soviets)? Well, under the French system of democracy and local self-government, it now has greater opportunities and uses them more effectively for the benefit of the electorate. And they are given more effective means to use their powers.

We tend to forget that we burst into socialism virtually from serfdom. The country and the people did not have the time to acquire even minimal knowledge of bourgeois democracy and the parliamentary systems that had been honed and perfected over the centuries. And afterwards, advancing along unblazed trails, we always looked down on the bourgeois states, although there were many things we should have taken a closer look at.

People went abroad to see what there was behind the façade and then returned to tell their trade union or Komsomol group how much their class brothers suffered. And wasn't the "enemy image" created through the efforts of both sides? Did it not embrace too the homegrown "baddies" of those days when we were taught assiduously to seek enemies in one another?

People went abroad for God knows what. But never for experience that could have helped all of us. What kind of councils can they have there? Mere bourgeois pseudo-democracy! Yet for some reason our own Communist brothers can work in them freely, responding to the wishes of the people and pursuing their own policy. While in our country, a Communist could be swallowed live in a matter of seconds were he to disagree with a view expressed from above. And for some reason, there, a group of deputies or even voters could protest against a decision taken by the council. While in our case – there is that stifling unanimity on all issues without exception, which is in itself unhealthy. And for some reason, there, the voters themselves, and not only the people they have elected, can attend council meetings. While our poor voter will not even be allowed by the militia into the building without a special reason. Too many whys spring to mind when you come into contact with bourgeois "pseudo-democracy." True, at local level – at the highest level I cannot yet judge...

Meanwhile they too have travelled and have their eyes open. They see first and foremost our clumsy pretences, our rationed prosperity, our rights and laws, to live according to which is not easy. And universal lies, and long-distance thought-control – how they poisoned the atmosphere in the world, till at last we realized: what on earth is happening to us, wither are we slipping?

Admired the Mediterranean aloud...

There were posters on the streets of Hérouville. It was before the elections. People were invited to vote for Michel Virengue, the Communist Party candidate in the general election. He is just over forty, one of the town's oldtimers. A man who enjoys prestige both in the party and in the commune – not for nothing is he responsible for the most important thing of all – the budget. But in addition to municipal affairs, our conversation also touched on the position of the party.

"Naturally," he said, "we can't fail to be disturbed by the falling prestige of Communists in the country. We didn't have the time to mobilize ourselves at the beginning of the eighties before Mitterrand launched his offensive. So on the whole it was the Socialists who benefited from our bloc with them, not we. Not to mention all the machinations to push us into the background. For instance, on the eve of these elections as well. Here the rule is: he who has TV on his side wins. The Socialists and the right had two hours TV time, while we had only 11 minutes. So how could we make for full play?

"Well, the most dangerous thing for us is anti-Soviet propaganda. For about 15 years France has been wallowing in anti-Sovietism, and it is presented and received as anti-Communism. In the minds of the ordinary people, the main points of anti-Soviet propaganda are linked immediately with the activities of the French Communist Party, and we find it increasingly difficult to explain away certain events, facts, even in recent years, which are used by our opponents' propaganda centres."

I think he was trying to spare the feelings of a representative of a fraternal party when he refrained from elaborating on the difficulties of explaining certain events and facts. But I can well imagine the difficult ideological position he and his fellow-party members, as well as activists in the France-U.S.S.R. Association, have now found themselves in. Our perestroika is welcomed by people of different orientations – lots of people, though of course not by everyone. Yet at the same time, people see our glasnost as the truth about former lies. The logic is simple: if today we ourselves admit that despite all our fundamental social achievements a great deal that was inherent to socialism had been turned upside down, and that its nucleus – democracy – had not been assured, then what we describe as anti-Soviet propaganda is in reality the truth that is now being confirmed.

By our own repetance and rectifications, we have done irreparable harm to anti-Soviet propaganda. But we can't just write off the fact that we are creating in the minds of the Philistines at least a new upside-down stereotype of what is really happening in our country today. And this change we ourselves have to accept as part of international political daily life, and find ways to promote a dialectical perception among people abroad of what is happening in our country, a perception that would rule out doubts and, even more important, rule out a rejection of communist ideas and of socialism, which still remains the most rational mode of life at the present stage of the development of mankind.

Faced with this need, one feels both a special anxiety and a special determination about our renewal: if perestroika is stifled – much that is fine, sensible and enduring in the world will suffer the same fate. That is why we must prove our socialist rightness. Not through the slogan: anything Soviet is excellent, anything else is rubbish. No. We must prove it through the image of the people, of civilization, in which the privately-owned home of a Soviet electrician looks quite normal.

Isn't it time we recognized that we owe the world a civilized dialogue, which we are only now beginning actively to support and offer? A dialogue in which in the past our "legitimate pride" had turned without our noticing it into arrogance. Isn't it our own blustering that has overflowed beyond the confines of our country?

But that is just incidentally. Looking at the various people I talked to, I can't help feeling envious of the ease and even elegance with which they criticized their own way of life – if only we could! Then I catch myself thinking that all my life I too have been criticizing their way of life. I can only now criticize our own (not everything Soviet is perfect!). But I can do it in a way to make them envious.

A journalist friend of mine who had been abroad in the old days told me how later he had glimpsed in the report of their "elder" a few words about himself. Among other suspicious things there was this: he had openly admired the Mediterranean. Well, that's what those times were like. If genetics and cybernetics were proclaimed the devil's ideas, why not the Mediterranean? It doesn't wash our shores.

So now too, just in case, no admiration of their municipal councils. All the more so, as those who served on these councils did not extoll them. Rather the contrary. And that, I admit, I do admire.

CAEN – PARIS – MOSCOW

Rule of law is a good thing

The Party can only change society by changing itself

LEONID IONIN,
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The recent Party conference supported the concept of a state governed by law. However, it did not furnish any exhaustive answers or foolproof recommendations which, in fact, it was not expected to provide. The conference charted the strategy and formulated the idea. Now is the time to engage in long uphill work to build up a state governed by law. To this end it will be necessary to uncover all the layers of legal nihilism, spurious stereotypes, bureaucratic prejudices, simple legal ignorance, apathy and pessimism so firmly entrenched over the many protracted decades of lawlessness and arbitrary action.

We must clearly and distinctly picture the road we are to take and not delude ourselves as to our prioneering role. We have taken it for granted that everything we do is done for the first time in the world. Which is why we forgave ourselves. Which is why we pardoned our mistakes and errors with lenient magnanimity. As a result, we are now obliged to start again from scratch, to cover ground that many other states have already covered, what others have already learned in the school of history. Though each state has its own specific features and its own specific tasks and goals, to comprehend these specific objectives, to focus our creative efforts on achieving them, it is vital firmly to assimilate what is sufficiently common knowledge.

The idea... and what stands behind the idea

What we know is... and here my reader must exert himself to prepare to master the precise language of scholarly definitions.

In its original meaning as accepted in the philosophy and juridical mentality of the eighteenth century, the state governed by law was a state whose one and **only** objective was to uphold the legal order and above all the personal freedoms and property rights of its citizens; moreover, taken as the yardstick of fairness and justice was not the will of one man or group, not even the will of the majority, but the sole depersonalized authority of the law.

This was understood as the minimal state. In effect, the state was reduced to law enforcement, to the protection of rights. One could wallow in luxury or starve. Rich or poor one enjoyed the right to voice one's opinions about the state and conditions in society. Everyone had the right to ruin or enrich himself. Society was a game, in which each played for his own stake, but a game played according to definite rules. These rules, i.e., laws, could not be broken and it was the state that was mandated to safeguard them.

Such was the initial concept. Subsequently, it expanded. Now it was no longer **exclusively** concern for the legal order and the safety of the citizenry. Now the state could, for instance, take on the burden of economic administration, undertake to cope with social problems, enhance the welfare of its citizens and ensure social security. Yet, however broadly the state might define its activity, it remained a state governed by law, provided its activity was based on the bedrock of legal principles, recorded, as a rule, in the Fundamental Law termed the national constitution.

However, at the heart of this new approach, which appeared to be consistent, convenient and advantageous to both the state and its citizens, was an explosive contradiction. As the state expanded its functions, the concept of human rights likewise changed. Rights were now divided into civil, or political, and socio-economic rights. The first set of rights are traditional, the essence of the idea of the state governed by law from its very inception. These rights are freedom of speech, assembly, conscience, inviolability of the individual and the home, and so on. Their observance within a state governed by law, whatever its definition, lies outside the pale of discussion. Without these rights there is no state governed by law.

In its present version, the state stood guarantor not only of the traditional, that is political, rights, but also of the new, that is, socio-economic, rights, i.e., the right to work, leisure, education, the right to a home, the right to old-age pensions, etc. The acknowledgement and de facto guaranteeing of these rights represent a salient feature of the socialist state.

But there lay the rub. As far as the aforementioned rights were concerned, we were indeed pioneers. Yet in our euphoria we failed to notice that a formidable danger lurked. The attainment of these new goals demanded tremendous exertion from the state, and the observance of the traditional civil rights and freedoms was pushed into the background and subsequently deemed irrational from the angle of "concern for men."

The thinking took roughly the following line: "Freedom of speech? What on earth for? There can be no discontented as the state takes care of everyone. Hence, don't interfere. Either say nothing or praise us (i.e., the state) while we build cloudless happiness for you." Anyone who dared speak out was silenced. The idea was to silence him or her with a pie, but as there were not enough pies for all, he or she was gagged with what lay to hand, in the hope that pie would come later on as the standard of welfare rose. Given this kind of cocern for man, few worried that the human being needed perhaps no pie at all, but simply a breath of air, the air of freedom.

Had this been merely Jesuitical craftiness on the part of the powers that be it would have not been so bad. Most, indeed, believed that to attain well-being and guaranteed social rights, traditional civil rights could, indeed, had to be sacrificed. Such is the way things are under socialism, it was asserted. The state takes care of its citizens as a doting father cares for his beloved children, demanding, however, in reply implicit obedience and tolerating no expression of will. In other words, as the state plays the game for all, so don't interfere with the grandiose player moving human "counters" across the boundless expanse of a territory occupying a sixth of the world's land mass.

In short, concern to ensure socio-

economic, "material" rights is not enough to classify a state as governed by law. We may seek plenty and well-being, we may even achieve it, but remain without any rights. Evgeny Zamyatin and Aldous Huxley warned the world about that in their famous anti-utopian novels. That was the danger we were unable to avoid earlier, one that continues to lie in wait, inasmuch as the state, seeking the goal of concern for the well-being of its citizens, constantly experiences the temptation to buy this well-being at the price of freedom.

The principles of the state governed by law

For just this reason **the rigorous unhesitating protection of civil rights comprises the paramount principle of the state governed by law.** These rights are under the wing of the law, and the entire might of the law-enforcement and legal systems serves to guarantee their observance.

A simple truth, one would think. But how hard to comprehend! How much must be done to change the human mentality and organizational structures so that this unconditional principle really starts to operate.

When the Party conference was in full swing, one delegate indignantly exclaimed from the rostrum: how can we tolerate two journalists daring to censure a resolution of the elected body! What a sadly familiar train of thought: even during perestroika we see it put into effect not only in harangues, but even in legislating. About a year ago the U.S.S.R. Supreme Soviet debated and adopted the Law on the procedure for appealing in court against malpractices by officials encroaching upon the rights of citizens. However, it transpired – and this has been noted in the media – that the said law is incapable in practice of guaranteeing the constitutional right of appeal to law courts against unlawful actions by the authorities. It concerns only appeals against decisions taken by a single official; on the other hand, **collegiate** decisions are not subject to the jurisdiction of the courts.

I do not know what there is more of in this formula – naiveté or cunning. Cunning, I think. It gives the official an edge in his game against the legal supervision of bureaucratic authority. Surely it is plain that any bureaucrat with a knowledge of the law would take care to impart to his unanimously adopted decision the stamp of collegiate approbation, hence the citizen would find himself absolutely defenceless in the face of the arbitrary action of the authorities.

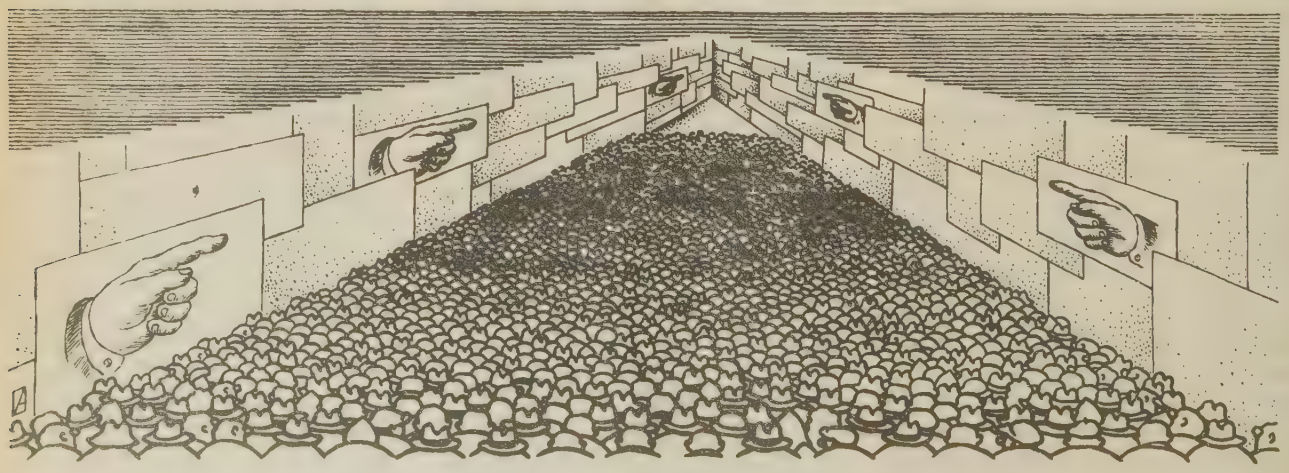
Documents and memoirs that tell us how members of the Political Bureau approved verdicts which Stalin had personally dictated against innocent people show what that kind of collegiate approval actually means. Moreover, collegiate decisions may not necessarily be lawful, even when adopted in conditions of genuine collegiate approval and true unanimity. Collegiate approval is no guarantee of legality; hence there are no grounds for placing such decisions outside the pale of the jurisdiction of the people's courts.

Contesting the legality of the new law as currently formulated, jurists say that major decisions affecting human lives, such as the provision of housing and pensions, are taken collegially. That is important, of course. However, decisions of a political order are likewise taken collegially. For instance, to permit a demonstration or otherwise, register or not a cooperative or an independent public organization. A meeting of the executive committee of a Soviet or other administrative instance would appear sufficient to decide once and for all, at times without the right of appeal, questions bearing upon the exercise of basic civil rights. The decision the executive committee takes is not subject to appeal in the law courts. Such is the way in which policy is made at provincial level. Such was the way in which policy was made before at the top. That leads straight to illegality. On the contrary, **in the state governed by law a decision of any body of power can be appealed against through the courts.**

Now let's turn to the law courts themselves. **In law-governed states, the law courts are independent.** For otherwise, the rulings and verdicts of the law court, even when pro forma within the context of the law, can become a function of an interpretation of the law from the angle of current political objectives, of political expediency. For that not to happen, it is essential that the judicial system be reformed. The aspects are many and varied. With that in mind, numerous proposals were tabled at the conference: that the tenure of a judge be extended, that the number of people's assessors be increased, and so on. Subsequently, it may be worth thinking about appointing judges for life, so that their decisions are not prompted by concern for tomorrow, by the wish to win popularity or the need to flatter superiors upon whom their nomination may depend. It may be worth thinking about introducing trial by jury. It is vital to subject such issues, along with many others, to in-depth scholarly analysis.

Next, **in state governed by law there exists what is known as constitutional supervision, the legal control of legislative acts.**

When we say that the law comes first, that the law is above all else, we still do not fully convey the principle of the attitude to the law in the law-governed state. After all, cases occur where the state and the judiciary act according to



Drawing by Anatoly Orekhov

the law, but the law incorporates a desire or directive of the "leader," "fuehrer" or ruling oligarchy. This is made law not in the figurative sense, but pro forma, accepted by the legislative bodies in full accordance with protocol and enshrined in the legal code.

In addition, there exist a plethora of what are known as sub-legal acts, which the different echelons of state administration adopt and which, while mandatory and enjoying the force of law, are motivated rather by considerations of departmental expediency than by constitutionally recorded legal concepts.

Hence, the state governed by law must have a special body to supervise current law-making from the point of view of its democratic character and conformity with the spirit and letter of Fundamental Law. In many countries this body is known as the Constitutional Court. In this country, the said functions are to be discharged by the *Committee of Constitutional Direction*. This represents a very special mechanism which safeguards democracy against "suicide," that is, the enactment of anti-democratic laws capable of transforming a constitution, albeit of the most democratic kind, into wishful thinking, into a neon advertisement, a glittering front for the unseemly legal backyards behind it.

It is painful to admit, but even the entire body of our scholarly literature fails to produce any profoundly in-depth theoretical analysis of the concept of the state governed by law. This is why the "rumour" of such a phenomenon has reached us so late. The point is that over the decades of Stalin's political and ideological regime, this concept found itself relegated to the same category as that of the presumption of innocence, the principle of appeal in the legal process, the principle of an independent judiciary, open hearings, in short, everything that underlies the awareness of law today.

We know what this category was. It was that of "bourgeois fabrication."

What next?

However, let us suppose we have set up a law-governed state. What next? Will we have absolute bliss then? Will everyone's rights be satisfied? Will nobody feel slighted? Will there be no more conflicts?

Let us not delude ourselves. Nothing of the sort. On the contrary, the creation of the law-governed state will lay bare problems which we had no cause to discuss seriously before. Conflicts will grow more acute and acquire a politico-legal character, as they can no longer be resolved by gagging mouths or dispatching the dissenter to jail or a psychiatric clinic.

We are tired of illegality, which is why we shout from every corner about rights and law, and put first the need legally to ensure a normal, stable social life. Yet social life cannot be reduced exclusively to the observance of law. What people do is motivated by considerations of political and economic expediency, realistic or utopian ideals about the future, selfish interests or altruistic urgings. Law does not do away with interests; they remain. Though the realization of these interests must necessarily remain within the framework of the law, at the same time they transcend the law, dictating the need for its further evolution and modification. This is what politics implies.

When human ambitions and objectives swell into stable tendencies and are subsequently represented by the more talented and active, political parties emerge. In the law-governed state the party in power usually expresses the interests of the majority. Its representatives comprise the majority in the legislative bodies and assume the highest office in the executive arm. They conduct their party's policy by modifying the operative legislation and enacting new laws.

Yet, at the same time the party is itself under the eye of the law, on the one hand, and ever in the critical public eye, on the other. The law is enforced by independent judicial authority and by the existence of constitutional supervison of the laws enacted through the party's efforts. Criticism of the policies the party pursues is the concern of the opposition in a multiparty system, or of the broad, albeit amorphous, public at large, under a one-party system.

Historically, we have a one-party system. In this situation, consistent constitutional supervision and criticism of the party's policy are somewhat complex. This implies real, not imagined, problems of political organization.

Imagine a supreme supervisory body, in this case the Committee of Constitutional Direction, composed of party members bound by party discipline who are obliged to rule on the legality of laws recommended by the party's supreme bodies and adopted by a legislative assembly likewise mainly composed of members of this party. A paradox! We have the left hand judging what the right hand is doing. Yet we have only one head!

The same refers to criticism. As history has shown, inner-party discussion on its own was for the most part not broad enough. It did not make for a sideline assessment of the chosen policy, for discernment of its possible undesirable consequences. No wonder, in the early 1930s, Stalin began to replace "criticism" with "self-criticism," which in effect implied criticism with the subsequent liquidation of all who disagreed with his line, or implemented his directives with inadequate zeal.

Stalin's "self-criticism" was not control over the correctness of the party's line, but control over possible deviation from that line. How easy then to march up a blind alley. The party has still not shed that understanding of criticism; indeed, one would be hard put to say whether it can rid itself of that understanding, while remaining, as it is, within the framework of the present one-party system. Society, organized in accordance with the principles of socialist plurality, is unlikely to develop into an influential factor for controlling the party's policy, especially when the magic of the novel terms has dissipated, the wave of enthusiasm died down, and the time has come for a systematic and dogged effort. After all, we did hear from the conference rostrum those familiar words about "irresponsible shouters" and threats against people "abusing" democracy. One speaker pontificated that it was not those out there in the streets shouting the slogans and demands, but we in the party committees who were implementing the real perestroika, whereas "they" only stood in our way. An alarming symptom!

The paradoxes of control and criticism are the paradoxes of the situation in which we have found ourselves today in our effort to remake as a law-governed state that particular political system that evolved over the decades marked by the personality cult and stagnation.

There are two ways out of the situation. Logic suggests two options. Either the institution of an opposition or the democratic restructuring of the party's life, the evolving of a stable machinery for inner-party discussions, the abolition or reduction of the role of coopting, real elections of party executives by secret ballot in accordance with their platforms and the like.

But that is what logic suggests. In real life, I think, there is only one option. In the country's current complex situation, for the time being only the CPSU represents the real tangible force capable of steering perestroika across the reefs and underwater rocks menacing the ship of state. *However, it will not change society unless it changes itself.* The 19th Party conference not only demonstrated that it was vital for the party to reach a new plateau; it also took the first step in that direction, a step essential to the establishment of a law-governed state.

Goethe formulated the rule for the organic sequence of human acts. **The first step,** he said, **is free, but we are slaves to the second.**

True enough, as we enter the epoch of the law-governed state, we become slaves to the law. That will engender a plethora of difficulties and problems novel to us. However, it is not chain gang slavery. Paraphrasing the New Testament one can observe that the burden of the law is light, and its yoke is a good thing.

■

The aim is an integrated market

Is perestroika being carried out in the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance? **Alexei Antonov,** *Deputy Premier and the U.S.S.R. permanent representative on the CMEA, is interviewed by New Times.*

New Times. Newspapers and magazines in the Soviet Union and other socialist countries are carrying articles critical of CMEA. They say that the council is not displaying flexibility and that the mechanism for cooperation no longer meets the requirements of the time.

Alexei Antonov. I must admit that that is a fair criticism. Indeed, CMEA has, on the whole, proved unprepared, and its mechanism has not adapted to using the new possibilities for expanding mutual ties, cooperation and the division of labour that have opened up thanks to the economic reforms being conducted in many of its member countries. This was discussed, in particular, at the 44th meeting of the council held recently in Prague, and rather critical remarks were made there.

N.T. And what about conclusions?

A.A. Conclusions are being drawn too. The meeting approved a number of documents of a strategic character, which defined the main areas of cooperation for the next three five-year-plan periods. The chief of these is the concept of the international socialist division of labour for 1991-2005. It is a long-term guideline for the concentration of funds and efforts in the principal areas of economic and social development, including the concerted renewal of existing economic potential. As our economies are mutually complementary, the coordinated modernization of the basic means of production is vitally important because obsolescence of machinery and technology in any one of the member countries is going to affect the other partners.

Our aim is not only the technical retooling of industry. We are planning a transition to a new model of the division of labour. The volume of trade will increase not thanks to a rise in the exchange of fuel and other raw materials for finished articles, but thanks to an expansion of intrabranch cooperation and specialization.

It is also important that the concept of the international socialist division of labour should help the member countries conduct the large-scale economic manoeuvres entailed by changes in investment policy. A clear orientation of the export specialization of the different countries, taking account of both their potential and market trends, will also contribute to the growth of trade.

The renewal of economic potential, modernization and structural changes will allow us to reach parity with industrial capitalist states in the scientific and technological level of production.

The 44th meeting also adopted special comprehensive programmes of multilateral cooperation by the European member countries of CMEA with Vietnam, Cuba and Mongolia.

N.T. What is the essence of these programmes?

A.A. The last three mentioned countries have inherited distorted economic structures. I have in mind backward farming in Vietnam, the narrow specialization of Cuba in sugar production, and primitive nomad cattle breeding in Mongolia. The peoples of these countries will have to work hard to bring their economies up to date, and the CMEA European members see it as their internationalist duty to help them do so. Special programmes envisage the most favourable terms of cooperation for these countries. For instance, price incentives have been set for their exports, and easy credits and low-tariff rates for the transportation of their foreign trade goods are granted. While tackling their specific tasks of industrialization, Vietnam, Cuba and Mongolia will not stand aloof from integration processes and are expected to increase their participation in carrying out CMEA's comprehensive programme of scientific and technological progress up to the year 2000, including participation in such fields as electronicization and biotechnology.

We believe that Vietnam, Cuba and Mongolia can make a more tangible contribution to the integration process. But for this purpose our collective aid, technical and economic assistance should be more effective. I have in mind not quantity, but a new quality – closer coordination of plans, direct production and scientific ties and joint ventures.

N.T. You have mentioned the comprehensive programme for scientific and technological progress of the CMEA states up to the year 2000. How is it being implemented?

A.A. We are worried about the insufficient practical results of development work. In some priority areas we have been unable to complete it as planned. In the opinion of many CMEA members, the scope of work should be reduced in some areas, and efforts concentrated on key problems whose solution will help – and I do not exaggerate – revolutionize production.

N.T. What key problems can you name?

A.A. It is necessary to speed up the preparation of large-scale scientific, production and technological projects embracing the full cycle – from research and development to the production and marketing of finished articles. I have in mind the building of fully automatic plants for the mass production of unified elements and units, and of finished engineering products measuring up to high international standards.

Another task is to master the production of articles on the basis of unified

electronic equipment, in particular a new generation of super-large and high-speed integrated circuits with a high degree of reliability and miniaturization, as well as mass-consumption computers, in particular, personal electronic computers and new-generation super electronic computers. Finally, the manufacture of equipment for biotechnology and the development of new structural materials have also been defined as priority tasks.

N.T. Let's return to the first question. You said at the outset that the tackling of urgent problems is impossible without readjusting the mechanism of cooperation...

A.A. Appreciable progress has at last been achieved on this complex issue. We have recognized the need for the gradual, stage-by-stage formation of an integrated socialist market. At the 44th meeting of the council, a number of member countries agreed that, relying on the flexible commodity-money mechanism, they would gradually provide conditions for the operation of such a market. The economic – price, currency and credit – and legal instruments of cooperation can be applied most effectively only in market conditions.

N.T. How do you see this process in practice?

A.A. One way of advancing to an integrated market lies in allowing the economic organizations of member countries to do business on their domestic markets on a reciprocal basis and take part in internal wholesale trade. Different forms, such as wholesale trade fairs, public sale exhibitions and chain stores, can be used for this purpose.

The emphasis should naturally be laid on expanding national markets, especially wholesale trade in means of production. Preparations for such trade are now under way in the Soviet Union and some other CMEA states. It is expected that by 1990 the greater part of the means of production in our country will be distributed through wholesale channels.

At a national fair, to be held in Moscow next October and November, all financial transactions will for the first time be made in transferable rubles. At the Prague meeting of CMEA, we invited interested countries to take part in this fair and other Soviet wholesale trade fairs of consumer goods and means of production, with the purchases to be paid either in a national currency or in transferable rubles. The sponsoring organizations from these countries could appear at the fairs both as buyers and sellers.

Meeting the wishes of other CMEA states, we are also ready to build an integrated market by expanding trade in the border areas and commodity exchange between the bodies responsible for domestic trade and the supply of machines and materials.

N.T. An integrated market also means a new approach to prices and currency.

A.A. A great deal will depend on the renewal of the price and monetary mechanism of integration. The main aim of the prices policy is to stimulate the production of articles measuring up to international standards and help expand ties with the world market. This can be achieved only by reducing the difference between contract and world market prices and promoting the independent price formation activity of enterprises and economic organizations.

The setting of real exchange values for our currencies, the introduction of mutual convertibility on this basis, and a wide use of national currencies in trade between socialist countries are the main ways of readjusting the monetary and financial system. For instance, the Soviet Union has concluded agreements envisaging the use of national currencies in monetary transactions with Bulgaria and Czechoslovakia. This applies both to direct ties and joint ventures. A similar agreement is soon to be concluded with Poland. Proposals are being worked out to establish the real exchange values of national currencies and transferable rubles.

N.T. Will not these far-reaching plans remain on paper, as has happened more than once in the past?

A.A. I hope not. Most CMEA states are directly linking their economic growth to a reorganization of the mechanism of cooperation and making it more flexible. Perestroika in CMEA is under way. A fundamentally new aspect is the drawing of immediate producers in the implementation of plans. The economic and legal conditions are being provided to draw producer associations into the international division of labour on a wide scale. For instance, the Soviet Union has substantially extended the rights of these associations by allowing them to engage in foreign economic activity independently and establish contacts with partners in other socialist countries. The idea is to set up joint-stock companies, joint ventures and investment and commercial organizations.

All these plans will materialize if the leaders revise their methods of guidance and, no less importantly, if a radical change is brought about at grass-roots level, in the psychology of economic executives. We are expecting bold solutions, progressive approaches and socialist enterprise.

N.T. The radical ideas you have spoken of did not win unanimous support at the 44th meeting of CMEA. For instance, Romania did not support the idea of providing conditions for an integrated market.

A.A. If you like, this is also a sign of changes in CMEA. We have made a conspicuous advance in carrying out the principle of interest. Each country decides what joint measures it will or will not take part in. Nothing is imposed on anyone.

Experience shows that real interest in cooperation arises only when the appropriate economic, political and ideological conditions and prerequisites take shape in each country. United on the main principles, we by no means consider it obligatory for the member countries to hold absolutely identical views on the rates and methods of integration. On the contrary, we proceed from the fact that not all countries are simultaneously prepared to participate in the intensive solution of problems facing CMEA. At the same time, the principle of interest ensures a quicker achievement of targets by those countries that are ready to take decisions and conduct integration experiments for the benefit of the community as a whole, including countries that have not yet defined their position.

N.T. And now the last question – ties between CMEA and the European Economic Community.

A.A. I would say that the recent signing of a joint declaration on the establishment of official realtions between CMEA and the EEC has become an event of world importance. We see not a few areas of interaction, such as scientific and technological cooperation, standardization, environmental protection, the power industry, nuclear power included, transport, statistics and economic forecasting. The spheres, forms and methods of cooperation are to be specified by experts from both economic bodies.

For their part, the CMEA states are interested in the extensive use of such progressive forms of cooperation as industrial coproduction and joint ventures. A most-favoured-nation regime for economic ties should clearly be created by both sides.

Feeling for stepping stones as we cross the river

Socialism the Chinese way

Chen Ruiming

In its report to the 13th National Congress of the Communist Party of China (October 1987), the Central Committee of the party emphasized the need to account for Chinese specifics in building socialism. That is a scientific generalization of the experience accumulated in China in the process of building a new society and the starting point of a further socialist modernization of the country.

The idea of building a socialist society with a Chinese face was advanced by Comrade Deng Xiaoping at the 12th Congress of the Communist Party of China. He said that in order to make progress in building socialism in China it was necessary first of all to follow the basic theoretical provisions of Marxism-Leninism and a socialist orientation, and secondly, to proceed from a knowledge of conditions in the country.

Why is our party putting so much emphasis now on the need to build socialism proceeding from China's specific conditions? The answer to that is that because that principle had been underestimated in the past, the great success in building socialism had been marred by quite a few failures for which a high price had had to be paid. Here are some examples.

First. A mistake was made in China in interpreting the basic dialectics of a socialist society. Following the completion of socialist reforms in farming, handicraft and capitalist industry and trade in 1956, we continued for a long time to attach prime importance to the class struggle and consider the antagonism between the working class and the bourgeoisie as the principal dialectic in a socialist society. That ultra-leftist deviation was taken to extremes during the "cultural revolution" and caused strife for ten years. The socialist development of the country slowed down as a result.

Second. We were mistaken in our dogmatic approach to the issue of the ownership of the means of production. Viewing society as one huge factory, we considered the expansion of socialist ownership as the only way to improve it. This led to an excessively monolithic structure of ownership and property, and the setting up on a large scale of people's communes as collective production cells, which displayed a high degree of socialization, and low efficiency.

Third. For a long time we assigned a subordinate position to productive forces on the assumption that the mere fact of wanting increased production plus the development of mass movements are enough to assure rapid growth. We clung to the sacrosanct "principles of socialism" and abided by tenets that were not essentially socialist, impeded the development of productive forces and were only suitable in the specific historical conditions of other nations. And, conversely, we opposed the "restoration of capitalism" and much that could have helped promote the development of productive forces.

All this has led to a moribund system of economic management by decree, and the political system arising from it, which is characterized above all by the excessive centralization of power. This severely restricted the development of productive forces and a socialist market economy. In a number of cases the norms of party life and principles of democratic centralism were grossly violated.

Analyzing these mistakes has helped us realize that the building of socialism in such a vast and underdeveloped oriental nation as China is a very complex task. The objectives before us have dictated the need for approaches different from those defined by the founders of Marxism, who believed that socialism would be built on the foundations of highly developed capitalism. The realities that faced us were different from those that

The new hotel International in Beijing

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prevailed in other socialist countries when they began to build a new society.

We have had to abandon a dogmatic interpretation of Marxism, along with a whole range of erroneous theoretical and practical attitudes ascribed to Marxism by Chinese and some foreign interpreters of it alike. We had to take a bold step and discard some conclusions incorporating elements of utopianism made by our forefathers.

Neither could we mechanically copy the models evolved in other countries. We have had to proceed from the specific conditions of China to apply the fundamental principles of Marxism to the realities of our country and evolve a model for building socialism accounting for Chinese specifics.

The idea was to act in the same way as those before us during the period of the new democratic revolution. Chinese Communists emerged victorious then precisely because they steered the revolution along a course that corresponded to the realities of China at the time: surrounding cities by villages.

The idea of building socialism the Chinese way is rich in content and has profound implications for economic, political, ideological, cultural, and other spheres. In this analysis we shall confine ourselves to some aspects of the problem.

What is the initial stage of socialism in China?

The theoretical platform for the initial stage of socialism in China was drawn up by the Communist Party between the 3rd Plenary Meeting of the Party's Central Committee of the Eleventh convocation in December 1978 and the 13th Party Congress. It was said in the report to the congress: "The correct understanding of the stage at which our society finds itself at this historical juncture is the most important issue of building specific Chinese socialism and a vital prerequisite for conducting the right policy and adopting the right attitudes."

One of the crucial features of the emergence of socialism in China is that under the influence of the victory of the Great October Socialist Revolution in Russia and as a result of the prolonged struggle of the Chinese people guided by the Communist Party, a semi-colonial and semi-feudal China bypassed the stage of the independent and total development of capitalism. Following the victory of the anti-imperialist and anti-feudal new democratic revolution, China stepped directly into socialism, but in order to be able fully to demonstrate its advantages over capitalism, a socialist society must be based on a high degree of production, socialization and an extensively developed market economy. Since the level of development of productive forces in China was low, it had no such basis. In order to create it, we had to go through a protracted period of development after the establishment of the socialist ownership of the means of production, and at that stage no haste or subjectivist tendency to bypass phases of development could be permitted.

A Beijing street on a day off

Xinhua -TASS photos

The initial stage of socialism in China can be described as follows. First, our society is socialist and we must firmly abide by socialism, rather than deviate from it. Second, our society is still at the initial stage of development. Taking account of this first consideration rules out right-wing deviation and recurrent mistakes in defining and pursuing political objectives. Deng Xiaoping said: "China can only follow the path of socialism. In a vast country with a billion-strong population, capitalism is clearly impossible." Taking account of the second consideration makes it possible to avoid putsch-type leftist actions, and has a sobering effect on naive comrades who would like to effect a "transition to communism" quickly and imminently.

We believe that the initial stage of socialism in China is not the first stage in the overall process of development experienced by nation that has chosen socialism. It is a specific period conditioned by the realities of China, and we must pass through it as we build socialism in the context of underdeveloped productive forces and an underdeveloped market economy.

Lenin emphasized on many occasions that in order to win competition with capitalists, Communists must learn to manage the economy properly and to do business and trade. They must learn from the merchant and the "ordinary capitalist salesmen who have received their training in big factories and big firms." Lenin further pointed out: "Either we pass this test in competition with private capital, or we fail completely."

How dialectically and realistically Lenin approached this issue! That is something that must be reflected on by those who, under the cover of leftist phraseology, would like to exclude from the practice of building a new society the idea of learning from "capitalist salesmen" and "competition with private capital."

Our party believes that the initial stage of socialism in China covers the entire period that began with the completion of the socialist transformation of the private ownership of the means of production in the 1950s, and end with the completion, on the whole, of socialist modernization. That period will cover at least a century. The main contradiction at this stage is between the growing material and cul-

tural requirements of the people and backward publicly owned production. The class struggle will continue for a long time within certain limits, but it is no longer the expression of the principal dialectic.

The Communist Party of China has defined its basic policies at the initial stage of socialism proceeding from the realities facing the country. Under that policy it must guide and rally the multi-ethnic nation around it in assigning economic development the top priority, conducting the reform and expanding external ties, achieving self-reliance through hard work, and making our country a rich, powerful, democratic and civilized modern socialist state.

Vital task

Proceeding from their positive and negative experience of the past thirty years, the Chinese Communists are well aware that the development of productive forces is a vital task in socialist society.

It was noted above that in the past we underestimated the importance of that task. It was only natural that the class struggle was in the forefront during the years of the revolutionary wars. The situation is different now that the class of exploiters has been wiped out, the working people have become the masters of the country, and China has entered the period of building socialism. The report to the 13th Party Congress underlined: "All that facilitates the development of productive forces is in the vital interests of the people and is therefore dictated by socialism and permitted by it. All that stands in the way of the growth of productive forces runs counter to scientific socialism and is therefore not permitted by it. Given these historical conditions, the criterion for the development of productive forces has a direct and decisive importance."

It may be assumed that the task of developing the productive forces is unrelated to the specifics of Chinese socialism, but even Lenin pointed out that the growth of productivity is the most important factor for the victory of the new social system. It must be said, however, that owing to the emergence of "blindfolded" movements in China, on many occasions in the past the class struggle was pushed to the fore and the idea of developing the productive forces was ignored and even criticized. That is why we have now taken that lesson from history to heart."

Reform of economic mechanism

Following the defeat of the Gang of Four, the Chinese people profoundly analyzed their past and their traditional concept of the socialist system. It is not our purpose to settle scores over personal wrongs or call to account those who acted under specific historical circumstances, but rather to work harder and better, avoid past mistakes or, in other words, as old Chinese saying goes, illuminate the present and future with past experience.

During the early years of popular government in China, various subjective and objective factors combined to make it inevitable that a command system of economic management should emerge in the country. Although in some respects it measured up to the challenges of the time and played an important role, it was nonetheless fraught with a number of flaws from the outset. The flaws in the highly centralized system of command management included confusing the functions of bodies of government and enterprises, excessively rigid state control, unjustified departmental and territorial divisions, importance of material production and the law of value underestimated, the absence of market competition, levelling, and so on.

As the country continued to develop economically, politically, ideologically, and culturally, and the situation within and without it changed, that system gradually ceased to correspond to the requirements for the growth of the productive forces, and came to generate a growing number of social contradictions leading to low efficiency, substandard production, shortages and a poor choice of goods, and slow progress in science and technology. The economic gap between China and the industrialized capitalist countries, which was narrowed by our hard work in the first years after liberation, began to grow again daily.

The nine years between the 3rd Plenary Meeting of the party's Central Committee of the Eleventh Convocation in 1978 and the 13th Party Congress saw many changes in China. During that period many new ideas emerged in keeping with the need for social progress, and the groundwork was laid for a new system of managing the economy and society. The economic reform underway in China is radical and comprehensive. It is not confined to giving the former system of management a face-lift. The idea is to implement a thorough-going reform in a whole range of interdependent sectors and aspects of production relations and the superstructure which do not correspond to the objective requirements of developing the productive forces. The report to the 13th Party Congress says: "The new economic mechanism... must be a mechanism for the regulation of the market by the state, whereby factories are geared to the market... That objective is to be attained gradually and requires an intensive preparatory effort. We must master the forms and methods of concentrating and distributing the productive forces and using planning and the market.

It must be realized that a market economy is part of socialized production on a large scale in general, and not merely a feature of capitalist society. The subject of market activities under socialism is fundamentally different from the subject of market activities under capitalism. The development of a socialist market economy does not rule out administrative management altogether. Nor does it exclude consolidating the ideological and political education of the masses or undermine the supremacy of socialism in other spheres.

The transition from traditional and predominantly administrative forms of economic management to the mechanism of a socialist market economy and macroscopic regulation by the state is incredibly difficult. The experience accumulated by our country and others over many years suggests that this is the only way of developing a socialist economy and increasing its efficiency, accelerating the progress of science and technology under an entirely new set of circumstances, very different from those during the years of revolutionary wars and the early period after the formation of the Republic.

The 13th Party Congress said that in order to assure the socialist development of the market economy and extend a well- developed market to all parts of the country, it is necessary to follow two basic conditions of economic reform: first, to continue to develop a mixed economy while preserving the leading role of public ownership, and second, to pursue a correct policy of distribution and employ various forms of it in assigning top priority to distribution according to one's work.

The General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, Zhao Ziyang, said:"In implementing the reform we are crossing the river and feeling for stepping stones, but our reform is not being carried out blindly. The 3rd Plenary Meeting of the Central Committee of the Eleventh Convocation and the 13th Party Congress clearly defined the objectives of restructuring and the ways of attaining them. We must act proceeding from realities, rather than from stereotypes and we must serve the interests of the predominant majority of the people. Those are the two norms of conduct that bring victories to our party. It is here that our faith in restructuring is rooted."

Maintain stability and cohesion

During the period of major change as the old system is replaced by a new one, the changes in the structure of interests are likely to cause alarm among the

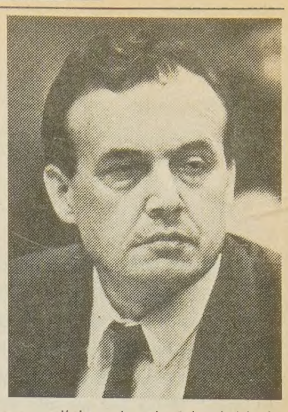
people. The renewal of concepts interferes with mutual understanding and social accord sensus. That is why a stable political situation in the country is crucial to the success of the planned socialist modernization.

It must be said that most members of our Party are firmly committed to the principles of Marxism-Leninism and approve of the policy of restructuring and expanding external ties. Those whose vision is impaired by leftist dogmatism are relatively few, but the leftist tendency has become deeply ingrained and creates obstacles to reform. At the same time, it must be said that at this initial stage of socialism we are still very poor and underdeveloped, and short of material assets. We lag far behind the industrialized capitalist countries, and this gives rise to a great many contradictions of various kinds. There are people who, proceeding from them, reject socialism and favour a capitalist system. They advocate bourgeois liberalization. As a rule, they have little idea of what the situation was like in China in the past or the present situation in the West. Their knowledge of Marxism-Leninism is poor.

The report to the 13th Congress of the Party says that removing the obstacles arising from dogmatic thinking and calls for liberalization and the overcoming of these erroneous tendencies should be part and parcel of socialism at its initial stage. At the same time, the congress said that the thinking of those who have not yet caught up with the reform must not be considered dogmatic and those who have been too outspoken as their consciousness was liberated must not be considered adherents of bourgeois liberalization.

Clearly, not propaganda appeals or instruction, or pressure can convince the dissidents. A radical way of dealing with erroneous views is to direct the attention of the working people towards carrying out the reform in China, viewing the whole world, encouraging popular endeavour in practical activities and the introduction of novelties and theoretical debate. Our slogan is to liberate the mind, realistically approach the matter in hand, rally together and look ahead. Socialism will realize its attractive potential only when we have completed restructuring and created a perfect system of socialist democracy, and assured a good standard of living for the masses. The stability and cohesion of our society, the unity and cohesion of the Party, daring quests, discoveries, and optimism will no doubt guarantee the flourishing of socialism in our country.

Beijing



Stipe Suvar:

To enrich socialism

***Stipe Suvar** has been elected President of the Presidium of the Central Committee of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia (LCY) for a term of one year. Polling over two thirds of the votes cast, he becomes the first President of the Presidium of the LCY Central Committee to be elected from a choice of two candidates.*

The Yugoslav magazine Danas wrote: "S. Suvar undoubtedly has a brilliant intellect and an oratorical temperament....

"In his public speeches he ingeniously applies the spirit of an old Kennedy formula, which in Suvar's version goes as follows: 'ask not what Yugoslavia can do for you but what you can do for Yugoslavia.' Basing himself on this philosophy and capitalizing on his long-established reputation as a ruthless fighter against nationalism, Suvar has become a political figure whose importance is recognized beyond his native republic."

Suvar, a Croatian, was born in Zagvozd, Croatia, in 1936. He graduated from the law department of the University of Zagreb and defended his thesis for the degree of Doctor of sociology in 1965. He engaged in scientific activity and headed a number of publications.

From 1974 to 1982 Suvar was member of the Executive Council of the Croatian Parliament (Sabor) and Chairman of the Republican Committee for Education and Culture. In 1972 he was co-opted onto the Central Committee of the League of Communists of Croatia (LCC) and elected chairman of the Commission of the LCC Central Committee for Ideology and Culture.

He was member of the Presidium of the LCC Central Committee from 1982 to 1986. From 1983 to 1987 he was editor-in-chief of the theoretical journal of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia, Socijalizam. He was elected a member of the Central Committee and a member of the Presidium of the Central Committee of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia at the 13th LCY Congress in 1986.

He has taken active part in various forums in Yugoslavia and abroad. His speeches are candid and polemical. He is fluent in several languages, including Russian. He is also the author of 18 books on the social structure of Yugoslav society, socialist self-government, the nationalities question and educational problems. His book, "Socialism and Nations", in which he gives much thought to the nationalities question in the U.S.S.R., was brought out in May 1988.

Last year he delivered a report at the celebration meeting in Belgrade devoted to the 70th anniversary of the October Revolution. "We Yugoslav Communists and all the people of our country who take to heart the cause of socialism welcome the present aspirations to speed up development and enrich socialism in the land of the October Revolution, as this could be of great importance for the development of world socialism and the struggle for peace and the security of humanity," Suvar said.

Suvar often turns to the problems of socialism in his speeches.

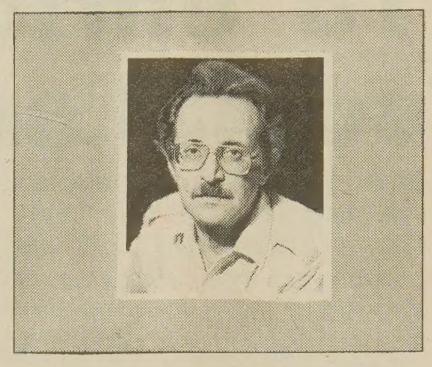
"The processes aimed at the further democratization of socialist societies in the world, though it is true not of all of them so far, meet with our approval. But we are obliged to continue along the course on which we took several steps of historic significance erlier than others. Therefore the overcoming of the present crisis phenomena and serious stagnation in our socialist development is of great importance in enhancing our role in the world and contributing to the development of socialism" (From a report at the plenary meeting of the LCY Central Committee in April 1987).

"Socialism experienced many recessions in its infantile stage, so to speak: it has not passed many concrete tests, especially because, on the one hand, it did not adhere to its own demands and principles and, on the other, it did not show enough respect for the objective circumstances and conditions of its development. Nevertheless, it is a heartening fact that it has started to learn from its own mistakes, and how. This is manifested quite strikingly at present."

"It is perhaps a crucial period, of the same importance as the period started by the October Revolution that is setting in in most socialist countries today." (From the report "The epoch-making importance of the October Revolution.")

■

Junior world



The ultimate argument

Together with the eternal questions: "Who is to blame?" and "What should be done?," a new one, bewildering and disturbing is insistently raising its head, like a blade of grass through the asphalt: "Who are we?" Who are we all? How are we to describe and assess the life we have built?

A piece of blank verse from the war years: "Once in a fascist dugout we found a big portrait of Adolf Hitler. We scratched our heads and wondered what to do with it... First, using green ink, we smeared his chin. Then we drew glasses round his eyes. After that we decided bushy sideburns would suit him... and at night we stuck the embellished portrait up in no-man's land." (Yuri Belash, **"Soldiers' pranks,"** recently published in the Moscow weekly Nedelya.)

The next item is from the crime news, **"the children's pranks"** of our times: "On April 22 at home I discovered that Hitler's portrait had disappeared. I realized that my brother had taken it. To sort things out I went to his school. In reply to my question my brother said he had taken Hitler's portrait and the teacher had torn it up. Full of anger I kicked my brother in the guts. He fell, then I knocked his head against the wall..." That was the evidence of 16-year-old K., a Leningrad worker. The report of his interrogation was published in a recent issue of the magazine Krokodil and for the first time the magazine, specializing in wit and humour, had time for neither, for the defendant K. goes on to explain: "The fascist ideology began to attract me in 1980. I was drawn by the swastika, and fascinated by the personality of Hitler. I read about 30 books about him... I believe Hitler was an outstanding personality."

Two young lads taking part in the TV late night programme "Outlook" spoke up with the same enthusiasm for the essence of nazism. It seems that a perfect society can be built fairly quickly, in the space of two generations, if compulsory sterilization is introduced, since the world is overpopulated. Exterminate the excess people, and the rest will have a trouble-free life. One sensed that the boys had a couple of other ideas, but apparently they were cut when the film was being edited, as even tape can't take everything. At any rate those two lads, unlike 16-year-old K., were also critical of Hitler, since they made it clear that he had been a **weak** fuehrer, and had not done anything particularly fascist. They, the present-day fascists, would show what could be done...

That TV piece with the boys, the loose arm band with a swastika on one of them, aroused a lot of talk. What is that? Where are we going? What have we come to?

But I had occasion to meet a nazi some twenty years ago. He arrived out of the blue, apologizing for calling uninvited. A tall, lanky lad with long arms, and eyes that could outstare you. He trailed his finger nail along the spines of the books on my shelf and said quietly: "We'll burn them."

He was a fourth-year physics student and he had come with a purpose: "We need a pen," he explained, and the word "pen" struck me for some reason. I'd been a person, now I was an object. A pen.

I told him that my views were the exact opposite of his. He tried to persuade me. Recruit me. I listened to him and said that if his plans were to be implemented, about 40 million people would have to be killed. I thought I had won with this ultimate argument – ultima Ratio. But he only shrugged and said: "So what?"

"So what?" We are constantly hearing those words, but in that case I would describe them as record-breaking. Forty million – so what? There must have been years of hard and merciless punishment of social activity, then years of showing people how futile it was, for that fantastic "So what?" to have been born – apathy towards society in some, towards people in others, and a general apathy in others again...

Arguments are only possible if you have at least one thing in common. You could say that education boils down to ensuring that each person should have something in common with all other people, so that he finds it physically impossible to reply "So what?" when the question of killing forty million or even just one person arises."

Even at the front there is a neutral zone; in civilian life there is none. We have reason for anxiety! Who are we? They are our own children, there's no getting away from them; it is in our midst, in our common consciousness, perhaps deep-down or somewhere at the very extremity that there emerged these blood-freezing ideas of the new black-shirts about an extra-quick (blitzkrieg!) building of a perfect society through the annihilation of imperfect people, no matter whether they are called "kulaks," "enemies of the people" or "racially inferior," or something else. We should raise the alarm! For decades the iron swastika has been circulating, catching new generations of youngsters on its four hooks. Not every form of violence is fascism, but every form of fascism is concentrated violence. Social evils impose themselves on the mentality of a child. The children of violence become its fathers.

How fine it would be to call a conference – a worldwide one, at national or even district level to discuss how to teach children without resorting to compulsion. How to raise them without violence. Force is gradually fading from international relations at the end of the century; a common point has been found – the threat of nuclear death. But are force and violence inevitable in the family and in the schools?

Punishment does not always produce a slave, but violence produces cowardly and aggressive people with fascist psychologies. There you have the argument against conventional methods of education. I would not like to hear in reply a bewildered: "So what?"

Simon Soloveychik

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